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- DANTO, ARTHUR C. *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace: A Philosophy of Art* [Flint Schier]
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EMANUEL WINTERITZ
Leonardo da Vinci as a Musician
200pp, with black-and-white illustrations. Yale University Press.
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In a passage in the *Treatato dell'arte de la pittura*, published in 1584, the blind Venetian theorist Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo proposed a novel approach to the traditional medieval iconography of the Nine Choirs of Music. Each choir, he recommended, should be devoted to a single instrument represented in each case by three of its most famous practitioners. There are echoes here of any number of Lomazzo's programmes (Guarino's scheme for the series of Musaei done by Angelo da Siena and Cosimo Tura for Lomazzo's studio at Belfiore comes immediately to mind), but the novelty of Lomazzo's proposal lies in the suggestion that the figures represented should be drawn not from the Bible or classical mythology but from among contemporaries or near-contemporaries. Lomazzo's own shortlist of the celestial twenty-seven is an interesting document of taste, being partly a celebration of Milanese musicians and partly stale formulas of praise in the *De viris illustribus* tradition. His fourth choir, made up of players of the lira, is headed by 'il maestro Leonardo Vinci pittore' in the original company of Alfonso della Villa and Alessandro Striggio, father of Monteverdi's librettist for *Orfeo* and the most highly praised virtuoso of his day.

By the time that the *Treatato* was written, the image of Leonardo as 'l'Uomo Universale' had become firmly established, through the received view of him as *uomo universale* as much as through the biographical efforts of Paolo Giovio and Vasari's famous description of Leonardo's performance before Galeazzo Sforza. Sources closer to the artist are more reticent about his musical skills, and it is noticeable that in contrast to the works of biographers, descriptions of Leonardo's life make no room for scepticism about the degree of Leonardo's expertise there. It is little doubt that he did actually play the lira da braccio, an instrument which in some ways anticipated the viola but differed importantly in that

in addition to five melody strings that could be stopped against the fingerboard, it also had two open strings which worked rather in the manner of drones. Few instruments have survived, but we know that the lira was principally used to accompany improvised song: a strong theoretical and iconographic tradition links it with Orphic singing, and both its name and

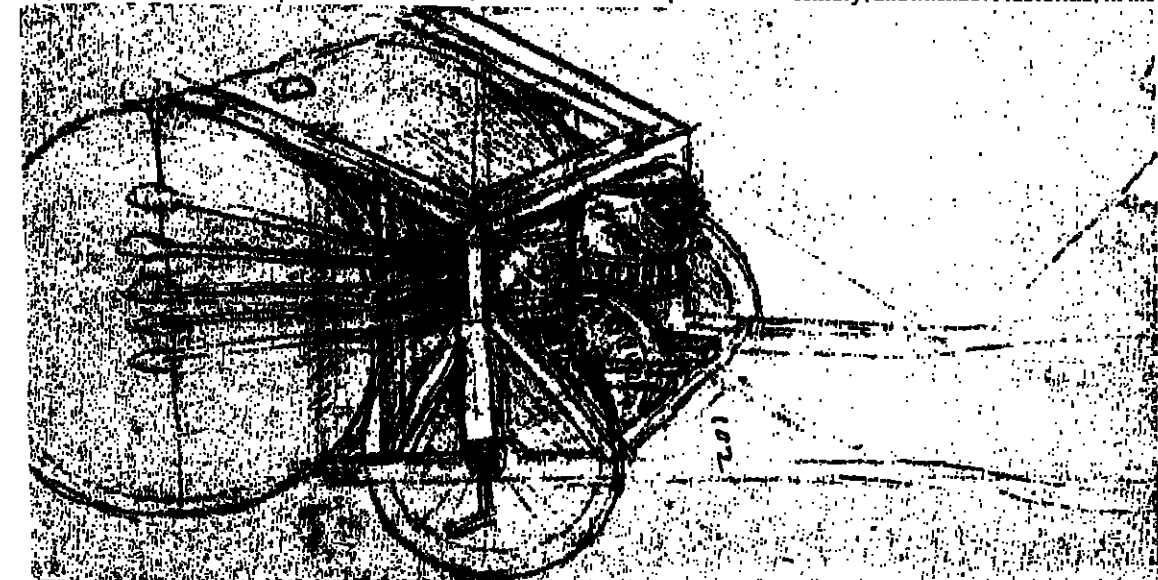
Musical is the first systematic and thorough attempt to study all the relevant notes and sketches against the background not just of contemporary musical instruments but also of Leonardo's other work with mechanisms and natural phenomena. The sketches in particular are often incomplete or ambiguous in their detail, and Winteritz's experience of

such an invention might have been prompted by practical musical experience. The sketches reveal that he finally overcame the mechanical problems, and although there is no evidence to suggest that Leonardo ever built the 'viola organista', others evidently did. Vincenzo Galilei, writing at the end of the sixteenth century, and Michael Praetorius, in the

nineteenth century), and the production of chords. A further group of drawings, already much discussed in the literature, relates to theatrical machines devised by Leonardo for productions at the court of Lodovico il Moro.

Winteritz's closely argued identification of sketches for instruments lies at the heart of his book. Four of the most important chapters are known through earlier published versions and it is useful to have revised texts gathered together with new material. Taken together these sections of the book are a permanent monument to the work of a distinguished historian of musical instrument design. But the attempt to provide context through preliminary essays (on musical environment, traditions and trends, musical friends, exchange of ideas, etc) is less successful, partly because these chapters are not always so well researched, and partly because the connections with Leonardo are often tangential at best. Thus the instrument-maker Lorenzo Gussasco (best known as Lorenzo da Pavia, Isabella d'Este's Venetian agent in artistic matters) is discussed at length for no better reason than that it is known that the artist stayed with him in 1499. Certainly it is strange to include a detailed account of a spinet now in the Metropolitan Museum as an example of Leonardo's work (even though it is dated twenty-three years after his death), when an organ with secure attribution is alive and well in the Correr Museum in Venice. Excursions of this sort give Winteritz's book a rather miscellaneous quality - it might have been preferable to present discussion of the sketches in a more straightforward and less encumbered way, as Kenneth Ponting has recently done for Leonardo's drawings of textile machines.

But in any case the context that needs to be emphasized is not so much the historical and social background (where little enough is known) as the relationship of these sketches to Leonardo's other activities. The importance of analogy in Leonardo's thought is evident from almost every page of the notebooks. Recently Martin Kemp has stressed (*Leonardo da Vinci: The Marvellous Works of Nature and Man*, 1981) that those who believe that Leonardo began by studying things as an artist but then became preoccupied with studying



Leonardo da Vinci's design for a mechanized drum activated by crank and for carriage wheels, from the book reviewed here. See also picture on page 96.

(incorrectly) presumed origin in antiquity lent both it and its performers considerable status.

With Leonardo's own writings and drawings we are on more secure ground. Remarks about music in the *Paragone* are admittedly a strange mixture of the original, the commonplace, the naive and the contradictory, reflecting perhaps the way in which Francesco Melzi assembled the work from passages in Leonardo's manuscripts and notebooks. But the notebooks themselves are filled with observations about acoustics, some derived from earlier authors but some quite new, as well as ideas for new musical instruments and modifications to existing ones. Emanuel Winteritz, founder and curator since 1942 of the department of musical instruments at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, is the first to recognize the lacunae in Jean Paul Richter's discussion of acoustics and instruments in the notebooks, and at the core of *Leonardo da Vinci* as a

the history of instrument technology pays dividends in the elucidation of passages which, inasmuch as they were noted by earlier commentators at all, were often misrepresented.

Ideas about acoustics and sketches for musical instruments and machines are scattered throughout Leonardo's notebooks, covering their entire chronological range. A major preoccupation seems to have been the invention of the 'viola organista', a stringed instrument with keyboard in which the strings were to be vibrated mechanically, either by a bow moving continuously backwards and forwards, or by a friction wheel. The intention was to devise a keyboard instrument capable of producing string tone (much as the organ produces wind tone), and the main mechanical difficulty lay in how the sounding strings were to be selected and then pressed against the vibrating mechanism. Given that Leonardo played the lira da braccio (often called the 'viola' in the sixteenth century), it is easy to see how

early years of the seventeenth, both refer to examples, and in the eighteenth century one was in the Medici collection under the supervision of Cristofori, inventor of the Forte-Piano. In fact, this instrument, which presumably allowed crescendo and diminuendo by finger pressure, may well have influenced Cristofori's own hammer action.

A second major group of sketches concerns the construction of drums and is again mostly taken up with schemes for mechanization. Perhaps not surprisingly in view of Leonardo's interest in war machines and fortifications, these instruments, some of vast proportions designed to be transported and activated by carriage wheels, were (if practically intended at all) more of military than musical use. Other sketches show Leonardo experimenting with the problems of obtaining different notes from a drum while beating it (an effect finally made possible by the invention of the mechanically tuned kettledrum in the

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"Perfection of the life, or of the work... In general the lives of writers are either imperfect in stock respects (ways of being imperfect, to echo George Steiner) on modes of sexual intercourse, are fundamentally finite) or else rather boring in the narration. I have never quite understood the appetite for literary lives, except as a respectable-sounding substitute for getting down to the works themselves.

A biography of Milton, no less! The man can hardly be as diabolic (or as fascinating) as his Satan; or as lordly as his Lord God; or as compassionate as his Christ. Come to that, nor could he easily be as innocent as his Adam and Eve, or as glibly, or as intrinsically interesting as our grand originals must necessarily be. Not even if there is something in him of every one of those creations.

Literary biographers do well to fall back on the most important part of their subjects' lives: the work. A. N. Wilson's life of Milton strikes one as having arisen out of the work, and keeps closely in touch with it, the prose in particular, throughout. He has no great revelations to make (thank God, one is inclined to feel), but he uses the existing sources deftly and conscientiously and his interpretation of events is humane and level-headed. It is a considerable qualification for the task that he has a grasp of the finer points and pointlessnesses of theological disputation and - more - is able to see them as the living things

they once were. It is not merely mischievousness or a pawky wit (both evinced elsewhere) that prompts him to observe, in connection with *Of Reformation Touching Church Discipline in England*, that "it needs an act of supreme historical imagination to be able to recapture an atmosphere in which Anglican bishops might be taken seriously; still more, one in which they might be thought threatening."

"The Scots, even in the seventeenth century, were an overeducated race." Here Wilson pays indirect tribute to Thomas Young, Milton's early tutor, who taught his charge Latin and Greek. The profit of it was, he read Ovid and Virgil, and then - going on to St Paul's and Christ's College, Cambridge - he mastered French, Italian, Spanish, Hebrew. No doubt another profit was that he learnt how to curse. Yet surely it was Milton's intimacy with classical literature that saved him from degenerating into a crazed polemicist. "That what the greatest and choicest wits of Athens, Rome, or modern Italy, and those Hebrews of old did for their country, I, in my proportion, with this over and above, of being a Christian, might do for mine..." Truth that was also beautiful prevailed over the ugly truths he felt compelled to spend so much time and energy and eyesight on promoting.

While Wilson feels the deepest respect and admiration for the older Milton, "God's Englishman", it seems that he quite dotes on the young Milton, the "Lady of Christ's", that "somewhat exquisite, infinitely intelligent and very beautiful youth", further described two pages later as possessing "rather sophisticated and lofty manners" and being (alas for his

college tutor) a "lofty and exquisite pupil". After such encomia it seems unlikely that Mary Powell, the "pretty young teenager", will find much mercy at this biographer's hands.

But "marriages, and what makes them a success or a failure, are impenetrably difficult things to interpret". Many readers may not care a damn about the relationship between Milton and his first wife. Quite possibly Wilson doesn't either; but he has to address himself to the subject. He does so sparingly and circumspectly, apart from a touch of romanticism when he visualizes the deserted husband sometimes thinking of Mary "with tender longings, sometimes with hurt fury", and a tendency to have it or allow Milton to have it both ways. Though earlier Wilson has represented him as a sociable character with a taste for extrovert and jolly companions, he now says that the poet's "idea of pleasure, since infancy, had been to sit silently with a book", whereas Mary "perhaps, had never sat silent in all her seventeen years". This picture of Mary, quite sympathetic though it is, doesn't accord with Wilson's belief that Sonnet IX was addressed to her:

Lady that in the prime of earliest youth
Wisely hast shunn'd the broad way and
And with those few art emulous seen
That labour up the hill of heavenly
Truth

With Milton's "sublime egotism" in mind, we can believe that he must have resented Mary's prolonged absence bitterly, whatever the causes. Having one's wife go home to mother is a rather ordinary thing to happen, and the ordinariness of it would not gratify a man imbued with so strong a sense of divine appointment.

And so Milton wrote his pamphlets in advocacy of divorce ("Let not England forget her precedence of teaching nations how to live"). "Although he writes from the heart", Wilson comments, "he is not merely writing about himself." And when those pamphlets promptly ran foul of Parliament's revival of censorship, he wrote *Areopagitica* - and the same comment applies. Also, one might add, having himself run a small select school for some years, he composed a tract *Of Education*. "The end then of learning is to repair the ruins of our first parents by regaining to know God aright" - a nice trailer for the forthcoming epic. He was in the happy, hazardous position of speaking simultaneously for himself, for England, and for God. The thought occurs that had he not been civilized by reading in the classics - and possibly by his irremovable vocation for poetry, in which sharp words serve instead of nasty deeds - then he might have proved, not (as Wilson suggests) "the most beautiful of capitalism's first-fruits", but the first fruit of some totalitarian monstrosity.

Wilson takes issue with Christopher Hill in his desire to save the rigid pamphlet from being read "in an aridly political light" as (which he imputes to Hill) "the first blast of a trumpet which we will hear again in the company of Rousseau, Engels and Marx". *et seq.* True, Milton was religious, he believed in God and God's purposes. His over-eagerness in justifying the ways of men towards Charles I will seem less distressing if we remember that he believed the monarch's execution to be God's intention. That is, it looks better today, when belief in divine workings has dwindled to something rare, even rich and strange. (Surely the violence of the King has to be in a different class from the secular barbarities, commonly to be seen on our television screens, of Pol Pot, Idi Amin *et hoc genus omne*.) And yet, restore the matter to its context, as Wilson urges, and it will appear hardly more notable than the justifying of executions on the grounds that they are incidental to some ineluctable, "scientific", historical process. One effort of the imagination makes Milton look grand; another makes him look rather ordinary. Douglas Bush has observed that "in a sacred cause no holds were barred" - and all causes are sacred in some sense. However splendid his prose style, Milton's polemics

delivered (in that "sneering, lofty, cross, and satirical voice") exist in a different world from his poetry: a world in which (as we say) we have to live, or someone had to live, but a world which is lesser because it itself will die.

Wilson devotes several pages to *De Doctrina Christiana*, arguing against the view of that work as heretical while still bringing out its independence, its divergences from traditional attitudes. Its "heresy" lies in "appealing to an inner principle of certainty", as Basil Willey has put it. "With a lofty self-reliance worthy of his own Satan, Milton frees himself from that last infirmity of noble Protestants - subservience to holy writ." Some awareness of his unorthodoxy in theology ought to palliate the puritanicalness of response whereby Milton is denied the measure of subtlety freely allowed to novelists, and so open our eyes to the fine and proper ambivalence which shows us Adam acting wrongly in joining with Eve in disobedience to God but also acting rightly in his love: "How can I live without thee?", even though he would then live for ever. The theological judgment coexists with the human verdict. Prelapsarianism we must dissent from Adam's action, but postlapsarianly (which curiously seems to require a hardly lesser effort of the imagination) we sympathize. Perhaps something similar is implied by Wilson's apparent self-contradiction, when he claims that "at every stage it was Milton's own, supremely independent vision of things which guided him" and, on the next page, that *Paradise Lost* was dictated by God and written in the language of God (an enhanced form of English, naturally) but dictated to "a mouthpiece who was greatly at odds with the words he had to speak".

Wilson loves Milton's poetry, though somewhat indiscriminately and rather nebulously. "L'Allegro", "Il Penseroso", *Comus*, "At a Solemn Music" and "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity" are "among the most sublime poetry in the literature of the world"; "Ad Joannem Rousium" (a mixture of playfulness and self-esteem issuing from the loss of his first collection of poems en route to the Bodleian) is "one of his finest occasional poems, undeservedly neglected because it is written in Latin"; and "Cyriack, this three years' day these eyes" (courageous, confident, sanctimonious, anything but delightful) is "one of his most delightful sonnets". This is endearing, and there is some biographical point in adducing "Ad Joannem Rousium" as testimony to the continuing sense of poetic vocation - yet what terms will be left for *Paradise Lost*, but for which Milton would be a minor English poet, a lesser Marvell?

The chapter on *Paradise Lost* consists of thirteen pages, slightly shorter than that on *Samson Agonistes*; but then, the latter work is a sort of "spiritual autobiography", with its "famous hammer blows", as Empson has it, "all applying to Milton himself". Probably this is as it had to be: either thirteen pages or a whole book? And Wilson does raise two prime topics. He concurs with C. S. Lewis as regards the corporeality of Milton's spiritual beings, their ability to enjoy eating and some form of sex - Milton believed this, he was not just speaking metaphorically. Indeed, there is little in the work that is not literal, and what there is is generally announced in advance. During the war in heaven

Among recent books on Milton, *Milton's Good God: A Study in Literary Theology* by Dennis Richard Danielson (292pp. Cambridge University Press, £20.00 £21.23744 0) lays a systematic foundation for understanding Milton's defence of the creator's justice; and Thomas N. Corns's *The Development of Milton's Prose Style* (118pp. Oxford University Press, £12.50. 0 19 811717 3) examines the word frequencies, lexical and syntactical features and imagery of Milton's tracts and pamphlets. Volume Eight of *The Complete Prose Works of John Milton* has just appeared (625pp. Yale University Press, £16.95. 0 300 02561 0); edited by Maurice Kelley, it

some of the contenders get the apart; this might seem to be a figure in that subsequently they fall to the their wounds, but then, and side the other considerations, death has come into the world. Wilson says Raphael, who tells Adam in Book 2 that he must perform like "spirits" in corporal forms, / As may express the best" while adding the tentative idea that earth may be simply the shadow of heaven and "things therein / Each a thought". He could also have quoted from *De Doctrina Christiana* to the effect that, even though they are unlikely to be accurate, we should conceive of God according to "the literal and figurative descriptions which he has seen fit to offer us in his sacred writings". Milton believed he was following in God's footsteps in this matter.

In connection with the "romantic" theory that Milton was unknowingly of the Devil's party (Dryden had already commented on Satan's heroic stance, Wilson rejects - with one hand, at any rate - the argument that, being a rebel and (though by no means crushed) an unsuccessful one, the poet instinctively associated himself with the fallen Angel. *Paradise Lost* may be, a Wilson says, the least egotistical of Milton's works, but - given the epics he stresses throughout - is the least absurd? In his "courage new to submit or yield" the poet could identify to the extent of making Satan provisionally heroic figure: one that only with the help of hindsight, was simultaneously see through. Satan being a hero at our expense, in his Coleridge observed) a mighty hero of mankind.

This is all the more feasible in the every writer wants the extra adrenalin-like drive, the invention and heartfelt reality, that come from any degree of identification, even momentary, with the subject in hand. And of course, commonplace though the proposition is, there is no reason suppose Milton exempt from the difficulty of making goodness credible and the ease of making evil convincing. Macbeth, for whom we like him without approving, is notoriously more interesting than Duncan could ever be.

Still, Wilson is right to point to the evidence in the poem of God continuing love. And, for we would a happy ending or at least a peaceful one, we shall be loath to quarrel with day these eyes" (courageous, confident, sanctimonious, anything but delightful) is "one of his most delightful sonnets". This is endearing, and there is some biographical point in adducing "Ad Joannem Rousium" as testimony to the continuing sense of poetic vocation - yet what terms will be left for *Paradise Lost*, but for which Milton would be a minor English poet, a lesser Marvell?

But better bland than brutal. This a concise, trimly organized biography, preferring the factual to the fancy-making good but not slavish use of subject's own words, and ably flavoured with the biographer's personality.

covers the period 1666 to 1680 and includes prose accompanying *Paradise Lost* and *Samson Agonistes*, *A Fair Course in the Art of Logic* (1670), *True Religion* (1673), and *A History of Moscovia*. Bruce Kellum dedicates a section to Milton in his *Seventeenth-Century English Literature* (295pp. Macmillan, £2.95 paperback, 0 333 26917 9), volume in the new *Macmillan History of Literature* series which covers the period 1660 to 1700. The editor, A. Norman Johnson, gives sketchy histories of the literature and its background, and is illustrated with photographs.

The Mystery of the Charity of Charles Péguy

By Geoffrey Hill

Nous sommes les derniers. Presque les après-derniers. Aussitôt après nous commence un autre âge, un tout autre monde, le monde de ceux qui ne croient plus à rien, qui s'en font gloire et orgueil.

Charles Péguy

Crack of a starting-pistol. Jean Jaurès dies in a wine-puddle. Who or what stares through the café-window creped in powder-smoke? The bill for the new farce reads *Sleepers Awake*.

History commands the stage wielding a toy gun, rehearsing another scene. It has raged so before, countless times; and will do, countless times more, in the guise of supreme clown, dire tragedian.

In Brutus' name martyr and mountebank ghost Caesar's ghost, his wounds of air and ink palely spouting. Jaurès' blood lies stiff on menu-card, shirt-front and handkerchief.

Did Péguy kill Jaurès? Did he incite the assassin? Must men stand by what they write as by their camp-beds or their weaponry or shell-shocked comrades while they sag and cry?

Would Péguy answer - stubbornly on guard among the *Cahiers*, with his army cape and stately place-nez and his hermit's beard, brooding on conscience and embattled hope?

Truth's pedagogue, braving an entrenched class of fools and secondaries, children of the world, his eyes caged and hostile behind glass - still Péguy said that Hope is a little child.

Violent contrariety of men and days; calm juddery bombardment of a silent film, showing such things: its canvas slashed with rain and St Elmo's fire. Victory of the machine!

The brisk celluloid clatters through the gate; the cortège of the century dances in the street; and over and over the jolly cartoon armies of France go reeling towards Verdun.

Rage and regret are tireless to explain stratagems of the out-maneuvred man, the charge and counter-charge. You know the drill, raw veteran, poet with the head of a bull.

Footlogger of genius, skirmisher with grace and ill-luck, sentinel of the sacrifice, without vantage of vanity, though mortal-proud, defend your first position to the last word.

The sun-tanned earth is your centurion and you its tribune. On the hard-won high places the old soldiers of old France crowd like good children wrapped in obedience

and sleep, and ready to be taken home. Whatever that vision, it is not a child's; it is what a child's vision can become. Memory, imagination, harvesters of those fields.

our gifts are spoils, our virtues epitaphs, our substance is the grass upon the graves. 'Du calme, mon vieux, du calme.' How studiously one cultivates the sugars of decay.

pâtisserie-tinklings of angels 'sieur-dame', the smile of the dead novice in its plush frame, while greed and disaffection are ingrained like chalk-dust in the ranklings of the mind.

'Rather the Marne than the *Cahiers*.' True enough, you took yourself off. Dying, your whole life fell into place. 'Sieurs-dames, this is the wall where he leaned and rested; this is the wall

from which he drank.' Péguy, you mock us now. History takes the measure of your brow in blank-eyed bronze; brave madrigal work of *Nidécasse*, sculpteur, cornered in the park

among the stout dogs and lame patriots and all those ghosts, far-gazing in mid-stride, rising from where they fell, still on parade, covered in glory and the blood of bestraggle.

Vistas of richness and reward. The cedar uprears its lawns of black cirrus. You have found hundred-fold return though in the land of exile. You are Joseph the Provider;

and in the fable this is your proper home; three sides of a courtyard where the bees thrum in the crimped hedges and the pigeons flirt and paddle, and sunlight pierces the heart-

shaped shutter-patterns in the afternoon, shadows of fleurs-de-lys on the stone floors. Here life is labour and pastime and orison like something from a simple book of hours;

and immortality, your measured task, blooms on the antique scars of the new desk among your relics, bits of ivory cartouche and dented snuffbox won at Austerlitz.

The proofs pile up; the dead are made alive to their posthumous fame. Here is the archive of your stewardship; here is your true domaine, its fields of discourse ripening to the Marne.

Château de Trie is yours, Chartres is yours, and the carved knight of Glours with the hound; Colombey-les-deux-Eglises; St Cyr's cadres and echelons are yours to command.

Yours is their dream of France, militant-pastoral: musky red gillyvors, the wicker bark of elements bedded across old bricks and the slow chain that cranks into the wall

morning and evening. It is Dornrémy restored; the mystic strategy of Foch and Bergson with its time-scent, dour panache deserving of martyrdom. It is an army

of poets, converts, vine-dressers, men skilled in wood or metal, peasants from the Bouscay, terse teachers of Latin and those unschooled in all but the hard rudiments of grace.

Such dreams portend, the dreamer prophesies, is this not true? Truly, if you are wise, deny such wisdom; bid the grim *bonne-femme* defend your door: 'M'sieur is not at home.'

This world is different, belongs to them - the lords of limit and of postumity. It matters little whether you go tamely, or whether you go tamely in your own way.

This is your enemies' country which they took in the small hours an age before you woke, went to the window; saw the mist-heaven statues of the lean king emerge at dawn.

Outflanked again, too bad! You still have pride, haggard obliquities: those that take remorse and the contempt of others for a muse, bound to the alexandrine as to the Code

Napoleon. Thus the bereaved soul returns upon itself, grows resolute at chess, in war-games hurling dice of immense loss into the breach; thus punitively incurses

This is no old Beauce manoir that you keep but the rue de St-Souven, the cramped shop, its unlovely *Cahiers* bulk like barricades, its fierce disciples, disciples and fools,

the camelot-cry of 'stick! At Thiers! says, all through your life the sound of broken glass. So much for Jaurès murdered in cold, pigmy by some vexed shadow of the Belle Époque.

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some guignol strutting at the window-frame.
But what of you, Péguy, who came to 'exult',
to be called 'wolfish' by your friends? The guilt
belongs to time; and you must leave on time.

Jaurès was killed blindly, yet with reason:
'let us have drums to beat down his great voice.'
So you spoke to the blood. So, you have risen
above all that and fallen flat on your face

5

among the beetroots, where we are constrained
to leave you sleeping and to step aside
from the fleshed bayonets, the fusillade
of red-rimmed smoke like stubble being burned;

to turn away and contemplate the working
of the radical soul – instinct, intelligence,
memory, call it what you will – waking
into the foreboding of its inheritance,

its landscape and inner domain; images
of earth and grace. Across Artois the rolls-images
march on Bethlehem; sun-showers fall
slantwise over the kalefield, the canal.

Hedgers and ditchers, quarrymen, thick-shod
curés de campagne, each with his load,
shake off those cares and burdens; they become,
in a bleak visionary instant, seraphim

looking towards Chartres, the spired sheaves,
stone-thronged annunciations, winged ogives
uplifted and uplifting from the winter-gleamed
furrows of that criss-cross-trodden ground.

Or say it is Pontecost: the hawthorn-tree,
set with congregate magnified flowers of may,
blooms in a haze of light; old chalk-pits brim
with seminal verdure from the roots of time.

Landscape is like revelation; it is both
angular crystal and the remotest things.
Cloud-shadows of seasons revisit the earth,
odourless myrrh borne by the wandering kings.

Happy are they who, under the gaze of God,
die for the 'terre charnelle', marry her blood
to theirs, and, in strange Christian hope, go down
into the darkness of resurrection,

into rap, ragwort, melancholy thistle,
almond meadowsweet, the freshest-brook
rising and running through small wilds of oak,
past the elder-tump that is the child's castle.

Inevitable high summer, richly scarred
with furze and grief; winds drumming the fame
of the tin legions lost in haystack and stream!
Here the lost are bleat, the scarred most sacred:

odd village workshops grimed and peppercorned
in a dust of dead spiders, paper-crowned
sunflowers with the bleached heads of rag dolls,
brushes in aspic, clay pots, twisted nails;

the clinking anvil and clear sheepbell-sound,
at noon and evening, of the angelus;
coffed girls like geese, labourers cap in hand,
and walled gardens expellered with angels;

solitary bookish ecstasies, proud tears,
proud tears, for the forlorn hope, the guerdon
of Sedan, 'oh les braves gens!', English Gordon
stepping down sedately into the spears.

Patience hardens to a pittance, courage
unflinchingly declines into sour rage,
the cobweb-banners, the shrill bugle-bands
and the bronze warriors resting on their wounds.

These fatal decencies, they make us lords
over ourselves: familial debts and dreads,
keepers of old scores, the kindly ones
telling their heady sons, the child-eyed cronies

who guard the votive candles and the faint
invalid's night-light of the sacrament,
a host of lilies and the table laid
for early mass from which you stood aside

to find salvation, your novena cleaving
brusquely against the grain of its own myth,
its truth and justice, to a kind of truth,
a justice hard to justify. 'Having

spoken his mind he'd a mind to be silent.'
But who would credit that, that one talent
dug from the claggy Beauce and returned to it
with love, honour, suchlike bitter fruit?

6

To dispense, with justice; or, to dispense
with justice. Thus the catholic god of France,
with honours all even, honours all, even
the damned in the brazen Invalides of Heaven.

Here there should be a section without words
for military band alone: 'Sambre et Meuse',
the 'Sidi Braham' or 'Le Roi s'Amuse';
white gloves and monocles and polished swords

and Dreyfus with his buttons off, chalk-faced
but standing to attention, the school prig
caught in some act and properly disgraced.
A puffy satrap prances on one leg

to snap the traitor's sword, his ordered rage
bursting with 'cran et gloire' and gout of rouge.
The chargers click and shiver. There is no stir
in the drawn ranks, among the hosts of the air,

all draped and gathered by the weird storm-light
cheap wood-engravings cast on those who fought
at Mars-la-Tour, Sedan; or on the men
in the world-famous stories of Jules Verne

or nailed at Golgotha. Drumrap and fife
hit the right note: 'A mort le Juif! Le Juif
à la lanterne!' Serenely the mob howls,
its silent mouthings hammered into scrolls

torn from *Apocalypse*. No wonder why
we fall to violence out of apathy,
redeemed by falling and restored to grace
beyond the dreams of mystic avarice.

But who are 'we', since history is law,
clad in our skins of silver, steel and hide,
or in our rage, with rotten teeth askew,
heroes or knaves as Clio shall decide?

'We' are crucified Pilate, Caiaphas
in his thin soutane and Judas with the face
of a man who has drunk wormwood. We come
back empty-handed from Jerusalem

counting our blessings, honestly admire
the wrath of the peacemakers, for example
Christ driving the money-changers from the temple,
applaud the Roman steadiness under fire.

We are the occasional just men who sit
in gaunt self-judgment on their self-defeat,
the élite hermits, secret orators
of an old faith devoted to new wars.

We are 'embusqués', having no wounds to show
save from the thorns, ecstatic at such pain.
Once more the truth advances; and again
the metaphors of blood begin to flow.

7

Salute us all, Christus with your iron
garlands of poppies and ripe carrion.
No, sleep where you stand; let some boy-officer
take up your vigil with your dungfork spear.

What vigil is this, then, among the polled
willows, cart-shafts uplilted against skies,
translucent rain at jutting calvaries;
on paths that are rutted and broken-walled?

What is this relic fumbled with such care
by mittened fingers in dugout or bomb-
tattered, jangling estaminet's upper room?
The incense from a treasured tabatière,

you watchmen at the Passion. Péguy said
'why do I write of war? Simply because
I have not been there. In time I shall cease
to invoke it.' We still dutifully read

'heureux ceux qui sont morts.' Drawn on the past
these presences endure; they have not ceased
to act, suffer, crouching into the hall
like labourers of their own memorial

or those who worship at its marble rots,
their many names one name, the common 'dur'
built into duration, the endurance of war:
blind Vigil herself, helpless and obdurate.

And yet what sight: Saul groping in the dust
for his broken glasses, or the men far-gone
on the road to Emmaus who saw the ghost.
Commit all this to memory. The line

filters, reforms, vanishes into the smoke
of its own unknowing; mother, dad,
gone in that shell-burst, with the other dead,
'pour la patrie', according to the book.

8

Dear lords of life, stump-toothed, with ragged breath,
throng after throng cast out upon the earth,
flesh into dust, who slowly come to use
dreams of oblivion in lieu of paradise,

push on, push on! – through struggle, exhaustion,
indignities of all kinds, the implous Christian
oratory, 'vos morituri', through berserk fear,
laughing, howling, 'servitude et grandeur'

in other words, in nameless gobbets thrown
up by the blast, names issuing from mouths
of the dying, with their dying breaths.
But rest assured, bristly-brave gentlemen

of Normandie and Loire. Death does you proud,
every heroic commonplace, 'Amor',
'Fidelitas', polished like old armour,
stamped forever into the featureless mud.

Poilus and sous-officiers who plod
to your lives' end, name your own recompense,
expecting nothing but the grace of France,
drawn to her arms, her august plenitude.

The blaze of death goes out, the mind leaps
for its salvation, is at once extinct;
its last thoughts tetter the furrows, distinct
in dawn twilight, caught on the barbed loops.

Whatever strikes and maims us it is not
fate, to our knowledge. En avant, Péguy!
The irony of advancement. Say 'we
possess nothing; try to hold on to that.'

9

There is an ancient landscape of green branches –
true tempérament de droite, you have your wish –
crosshatching twigs and light, goldfinches
among the peppery lilac, the small fish

pencilled into the stream. Ah, such a land
the Ile de France once was. Viréral and horn
wind through the meadows, the dawn-masses sound
fresh triumphs for our Saviour crowned with scorn.

Good governors and captains, by your leave,
you also were sore-wounded but those wars
are ended. Iron men who bell the hours,
marshals of porte-cochère and carriage-drive,

this is indeed perfection, this is the heart
of the mystère. Yet one would not suppose
Péguy's 'defeat', 'affliction', your lost cause.
Old Bourbons view-hallooing for regret

among the cobwebs and the ghostly wine,
you dream of warrior-poets and the Meuse
flowing so sweetly; the androgynous Muse
your priest-confessor, sister-châtelaine.

How the mood swells to greet the gathering storm!
The chestnut trees begin to thresh and cast
huge canisters of blossom at each gust.
Coup de tonnerre! Bismarck is in the room!

Bad memories, seigneurs? Such wraiths appear
on summer evenings when the goat-swarm spins
a dying moment on the tremulous air.
The curtains billow and the rain begins

NOTES

2.1. post with the head of a bull./Poetry, a tapestry by Jean Lurcat,
depicts the twelve signs of the zodiac and a poet with the head of a
bull.

2.7. Rather the Marne than the *Cahiers*/adapts a phrase from a review-
article by P. McCarthy, *TLS*, June 16, 1978, p. 675.

4.1. the lords of limit/The phrase is Auden's, from an early poem
'Now from my window-all I watch the night'. See *The English
Auden*, edited by Edward Mendelson (London, 1977), pp. 115-16.

4.6. the camelot-cry of 'sticker'!/Les camelots du roi was a right-wing,
anti-Dreyfusard organization, prominent in the street-battles of the
period.

4.6. As Tharaud says, Daniel Halévy, *Péguy and Les Cahiers de la
Quinzaine*, translated from the French by Ruth Beckett (London,
1946), p.171: 'Always, all through his life, this sound of broken glass, to
use Tharaud's expression.'

5.8. die for the 'terre charnelle'./Charles Péguy, *Essai* (1913): 'Heureux
ceux qui sont morts pour la terre charnelle, Mais pourvu que ce fût
dans une juste guerre.'

9.1. true tempérament de droite, you have your wish./See Robert
Speaight, *Georges Bernanos* (London, 1973), p.36, for 'what Jacques
Maritain has called a tempérament de droite'. See also pp.17-18 for
Speaight's view of the great similarities, as well as the great differ-
ences, between Bernanos and Péguy.

9.8. 'Je est un autre', that fatal telegram./Arthur Rimbaud, *Lettre à
Georges Izambard*, May 1871: 'vous ne comprendrez pas du tout, et je
ne saurais presque vous expliquer... Je est un autre.'

10.7. 'Encore plus douloureux et doux'./From a quatrain by Charles
Péguy.

10.11. 'In memory of those things these words were born'./adapts a
sentence from Marcel Raymond, *From Baudelaire to Surrealism* (Lon-
don, 1961), p.190: referring to Péguy's 'Présentation de la Beauce à
Notre-Dame de Chartres'.

The Mystery of the Charity of Charles Péguy will be published by André Deutsch in association with Agenda Editions in April this year.

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commentary

Cheek to chic

Mark Amory

Cecil Beaton Memorial Exhibition
Michael Parkin Gallery, 11 Motcomb
Street, London W1

The butterflies that survive turn out, almost by definition, to be made of iron. Somewhere between the filmy, eye-catching wings there must be a body of steel, a need or ambition fierce enough to keep the creature aloft through the bad times. Sir Cecil Beaton lived and swooned from the end of the First World War and when he died in 1981 he was still tolerably rich and famous. He was not, like Noel Coward, his own invention. On the contrary he fitted himself into a familiar if tricky role, the artistic friend of the rich and famous. Nor did he take accurate stock of his own strengths and weaknesses and marshal his resources accordingly. His aim was higher than his achievement. Wanting to strut upon the stage himself, he found that his talent was for designing the scenery behind the actor and, particularly, the clothes on his back; royalty clamoured for him to photograph them, only his friends sat for his oils; his chattering diaries continue to tell, but a public could not be found for his plays. Nor was he born aristocratic or beautiful; society had to be persuaded to find him charming. So there were disappointments and rebuffs in his personal as well as his professional career. Nevertheless an old enemy concedes, "To wear gold dust in your hair when and where Cecil wore gold dust in his hair, took real courage." The steel was there.

It is not, however, immediately apparent at the Parkin Gallery. Almost all of the more than 200 drawings, paintings and stage designs are intended to please or amuse. Many are of people. When Beaton is trying to please his subject he may have succeeded but the results are not interesting to us: enlarged eyes and long curling lashes imposed on a tolerable likeness - winsome, lose some. If there was more to be recorded about Tilly Losch, Beaton has not included it. A great green oil painting of the Earl of Pembroke certainly makes him look handsome but reveals no more. The drawings where Beaton is trying to amuse repay more



André Gide by Cecil Beaton

attention. Slightly distorted but short of caricature, the best make a sharp point, reveal an interesting view of the famous or nearly famous. At this level the exhibition is pure pleasure, visual footnotes to the social history of the century. A sketch that looks as if it were dashed off shows Daisy Fellowes reclining on a yacht and summons up a whole lost world of bitchy elegance.

When Beaton can be seen to be trying harder the results are less happy. Royal snobbery is the snobbery that has worn least well and the Queen Mother deluged in her favourite lilac is just rather than gauche (though Wallis Simpson, who may have become royal but really belonged among the chic, looks sadly down at us to some effect). The oil paintings - Alec Guinness as a sinister, secretive green Buddha, James Pope-Hennessy a terrified ghost, possibly underwater - are no more revealing and, aggressively ugly, lack charm. The stage designs are, presumably, evocative for those who remember the productions. Prepared to indulge myself, I went up to what I took to be Sir Frederick Ashton as an ugly sister in *Cinderella* when I found that it was Countess Crawford in a version of *The Rose and the Ring* staged in 1922, I lost interest. This gossip approach holds good for almost all the works gathered here. Few if any stand as objects of beauty or interest in their own right. It is who they are, not what they are, that counts. But if the exhibition is seen as having the same relationship to the National Portrait Gallery as Chips Channon's diaries have to Trevelyan's *Social History of England*, then it can be allowed to be fascinating. The flashing wings are after all the justification of the butterfly.

The theology behind the theorizing

Peter Kemp

Voices: The Arts Without Mystery?
Channel 4

The most eloquent contributions to last week's *Voices* were dumfounded looks. Recapitulating the thesis of his Reith Lectures about the need to venerate the numinous quality of art, Denis Donoghue offered an analogy: response to art, he explained, isn't like belief in God; it is closer to awareness of "the mystery that a phrase like 'the gods' would evoke even today", "something like the Eleusinian sense which attaches to the gods". To judge from the frozen facial expressions this provoked among his listeners, bewilderment, not mystery, was what he had conjured up. Much of Terry Eagleton's surprise must have been at Donoghue's sudden willingness to play into his hands. Since one of his contentions was that Donoghue sees art as a mystery only approachable by initiates, it was surprising to find Donoghue trying to counter this by likening art to the Eleusinian mysteries. With caustic congratulations, "Now you're talking more openly. And that's good", Eagleton pointed on the hieratic imagery as overt evidence of the theology behind the theorizing.

Covert indications of it were already in generous supply. Donoghue's view of art is not, as he sharply insists, religious - but it is religious. Art for him is not a religion substitute; it is a religion resembler - as his arguments

and images frequently confirm. Regularly retreating like a churchman under pressure, into the nebulous bolt-hole of "mystery", he outlined his creed in terms more usually heard from the pulpit than the podium. "A secular society", he announced, "believes in knowledge and nothing else." Deplorably, it will not accept that "something may be beyond knowledge". Accordingly, the mystery of art is nowadays profaned by reductive rationalisation - from "the zealous of explanation", as the Reith Lectures called them. Valuing man rather than mystery, they put their faith in psychoanalysis and the like. Guilty of "spiritual vanity", they fail to recognize that art should be "appreciated" and "perhaps revered".

For Donoghue, art requires celebration rather than cerebration. "It is a requirement that we bend the knee", he has said of Yeats's poetry. Instead of such reverent genuflections, he now notes an upsurge of "brahmic certitude", the secular equivalent of the sin of presumption. As a discipline to root it out, Donoghue recommends "a critical vocabulary that would foster delay", something he sees as analogous to scruple in morality. Intellectual humility, it might be thought, would more valuably be fostered by proper observance of the processes of critical investigation than by Donoghue's doxology of dawdling. But he practises what he preaches. And it was with much crab-wise procrastination that "That's something of what I mean" etc - that he retraced his Reith Lectures argument.

Quickly, Melvyn Bragg attacked his strictures on television coverage of the

arts, suggesting - all too truly - the reverence. To endorse this he had the hand in the studio and eager to testify as to what being filmed for *The South Bank Show* had meant to him. Albeit he expressed approval: it had been appearing on the programme, someone had recognized him, and he was converted to musical appreciation as a result. Unfortunately, this bogged so generously tossed to Bragg - some withered embarrassment when Maxwell Davies inadvertently drenched it with Parquet. "I actually get anywhere near the mystery of music", he suddenly poured forth, "you have to leave words be altogether." "But I thought you were suggesting earlier that Melvyn Bragg had achieved some remarkable..." Donoghue lethally murmured.

It was left to Terry Eagleton to provide the really tenacious grip with Donoghue's beliefs. And, though sometimes slightly encumbered by ideological baggage of his own, he did so very agilely, managing to do Donoghue, for all his sidesman-like stepping into his crypto-theological corner, missing that it is "dangerous" close the world of art to rational discussion. Eagleton argued in a way that did credit to his credo. The text given scope to do so was, it should be added, due to the adept chairmanship of Robert Hutchison. Taking out from Al Alvarez, he brought to the programme at one more control less intrusion. Debate without him, he ensured, was refreshingly short from *The Arts Without Mystery*.

Inside and out

Will Alsop

Ten New Buildings and Aldo Rossi
ICA

The two current exhibitions at the ICA are Architecture, not just building. There is a common assumption that all new building is Architecture which, in part, gives the architect a bad name and the public an inherent mistrust of any new proposal. Quite clearly buildings have to attain the status of "Architecture" as paintings have to transcend the terms "craft" or "hobby".

Both *Ten New Buildings* and *Aldo Rossi* show the architect's return of interest in the intangible. No longer does the architect have to rationalize every part and penny; instead the investment is assessed in terms of the experience of the place. It must contain mystery, surprise, contradiction and comfort and not be merely the elegant solution to a problem. The modern movement encouraged the architect to consider the design of buildings as a problem-solving exercise, placing the emphasis on the plan as a determinant of the final object, as opposed to a broader consideration of the building's aesthetic quality. The old dictum "form follows function" could, in some cases in these exhibitions, be reversed.

The last ten years have also witnessed the return of architect's drawings as artifacts in their own right. No longer are they rather minimal technical drawings with little or no expression; they have emerged as a device to explore the often theatrical characteristics of a proposal. This has resulted in architectural exhibitions becoming more palatable than they used to be, but it is a development which can also lead to confusion as the layman attempts to contemplate an image as a built form that patently defies the laws of gravity which are, after all, the only universal limitations to the architect's activity.

A major observation regarding the contents of *Ten New Buildings* is that there seems, at last, to be no coherent style that links the eleven architects on show. At a stroke the lay critic's justified groan that "every new building looks the same" is removed. Within the ICA we find large formal,

almost classical, propositions, such as James Stirling's Staatsgalerie at Stuttgart, together with the disarticulated forms of Henri Ciriani's low-cost housing at Saint-Denis. There are also the manipulation of known urban components, as in Arata Isozaki's plaza within a square, and superb isolated jewels like Mario Botta's Casa Rotunda. This lack of consistency is refreshing and tends to make a nonsense of the activities of some current architectural theorists who insist on attempting to order and label the outburst of multi-faceted architectural exuberance.

There are, of course, those who would consider the lack of coherence as a sign of a weakness within society. The apparent loss of universal agreement within the profession is seen as the last flight of fancy before a total collapse. It is no coincidence that there is more generally a move towards decentralization and a demand for a response to the peculiarities of small geographical areas. A school by Aldo Rossi would perhaps not be appropriate for North-East London: we expect to recognize our locations by the uniqueness of their new buildings in much the same way that older buildings inform us of our whereabouts.

The work of Aldo Rossi, to whom a whole exhibition is devoted, is often thought of as an explosion of imagination upon a fairly arid scene. But there is a tendency within the Italian architectural world that makes Rossi's work almost inevitable. His inheritance from the twentieth century includes in particular the work of Giuseppe Terragni, whose Casa del Fascio (1932) was a rallying point for the local Fascist party. On the face of it the building appears as a straightforward piece of Modernist design. On closer inspection it goes further, playfully placing walls within a concrete frame, and creating patterns of opening and solid. What on the outward face has no frills, inwardly contains the unexpected. Rossi's work, too, is characterized by extremely simple forms that deliberately evoke a child-like quality, and often this appears almost simplistically in the plan, as in Housing for San Rocco and Monza. The outward box of the Tomb for the Mottenti Family at Giussani is contradicted, by its contents. The

exterior is as severely plain as we expect a tomb to be, but its contrasting interior illustrates the endless possibilities of building when freed from a strictly rational programme.

The exhibition as a whole is enjoyable and representative of one of the important current architectural debates. However, it is puzzling why it should be included in the *Art and Architecture* series. Is it that the close architects are more "arty" or even that the artists to be shown later in the series are more architectural? The exhibition is essentially architectural and if these buildings are also good, so much the better. Certainly, none of the buildings on show would gain from being applied artwork or the intervention of an artist. I was also concerned at the presence of only one British Architect. The inclusion of some names - Norman Foster, Richard Rogers - would be an even greater diversification of the architect's art. The Modernist movement had their say yet and it is possible that it is only they who can show us how to respond truly to the challenges posed by the buildings which technology on work and leisure. To the end the breakdown of style, as illustrated in the exhibition, is an important contributor, but underlying this development one can see signs of marriage between freedom of expression and the discovery of a programmatic playfulness among younger contemporaries.

The *Art and Architecture* series at the ICA will continue with *Art and Architecture: Scenes and Conversations*, including work by Judith Sargent Murray, Gordon, Scarth, MacDonald and Michael Huxford, from April 2 to April 22. *Drawings and Architecture* will run from February 20 to April 2, with work by Diana Gray and Mario Gandelsonas. GRAU, Coy Howard, Robert Kohn, Bruno Reichlin and Fabio Reinhart, and Massimo Scolari. *Model Rooms of the Contemporary British Architecture* including work by Jeremy Dixon, John Outram, Ralph Lemon, and Robert Reid, Alan Stanton, and Peter Wadley, will be on show from May 2 to May 22, and an installation by Mark Moss can be seen from April 20 to May 22.

American notes

Christopher Hitchens

Somewhere - I think it's in *Joy in the Morning* - Bertie Wooster and Jeeves are discussing some high-to-middle-class work and the young master tells his faithful manservant if it is a book that is not, Bertie expresses his surprise by saying that it's the only book he's ever heard of that isn't.

No exchange must bear the imprint of Woolhouse's American years. Here, the main prizes are absolutely available. All airport paperback are, of course, "number one bestsellers". But almost every other book has been at least "nominated" for at least an "honorary" citation for some award or other. The fact that charitable donations are tax-deductible means that many rich nonentities perpetuate their names by endowing a prize. And the publishing and public relations world has made a mint out of the business of getting well-known writers to contribute pre-publication notices (or "puffs") as they ought to be known. It has reached the point where invitations to investitures of literary merit are as common as junk mail invitations to lunch parties. The only passing consolation is that certain prizes have become discredited owing to dubious sponsorship or crass choices.

It's a pleasure, therefore, to say a little about the National Book Critics Circle, whose annual awards were bestowed on January 27. The Circle is made up of people who earn their living by writing actual book criticism. It is not, like some outfits one could name, an offshoot of "the trade". It makes awards only in four categories, which marks it off from the endless and boundless race in which everybody is eligible for at least something from the brain-trust. It does not give money, though the members are rumoured to have had a whip-round in order to have the pieces of paper properly framed for the winners.

Insofar as such an enterprise can be, the NBCC is democratic. It has about 300 members around the country, consisting of book reviewers and literary editors. There is a twenty-four member board of directors chosen by election but inevitably very heavily weighted in favour of New York and Washington. In the business of choosing winners (five nominees are considered in each of the four categories) the general membership meets in person and chooses by ballot and the remainder are chosen by the board. Only after that does the room fill up with smoke.

This year, the only major argument was over the nonfiction award (the other categories are, sensibly enough, fiction, literary criticism and poetry with "general literary distinction" prize which is not awarded every year). After a considerable wrangle, the judges chose Robert Caro's biography of Lyndon Johnson over George

Kennan's *The Nuclear Delusion*. The opposition to Caro centred on the fact that he intends to write a trilogy and has thus far produced only one volume. But the scale of the book, and the scholarly revelations contained in it, carried the day. The palm for criticism went to Gore Vidal's latest collection (notwithstanding Julian Symons's reservations in the *TLS*, August 27, 1982).

Not everything about the NBCC is ideal. The metropolitans, according to one or two insiders, can usually intimidate the literary editors of the papers from Fort Worth and Des Moines. It is possible for a book to be nominated without having been read even by its nominator. Or at least, so much can be intuited from the fact that two books proposed this year by directors failed to get a single vote. The books, after all, have to be argued about. If it had been any other prize, the publishers of the luckless volumes would boldly say "nominated for the so-and-so award". But in this case, the tides of puffery are held pretty well at bay.

A revival of concern about manners and etiquette might not seem the most probable American development. But a second thought easily supplies the clue. So great has been the upheaval and mores over the last decade or two, and so extensive and swift have alterations in custom become, that many Americans wanting to do the right thing are embarking on a journey without maps. To take only the most obvious example - why is there no accepted and innocuous word for the introduction of an unmarried lover? Some of the contortions on this point are pathetically euphemistic ("my friend") and some are plain ghastly (New Yorkers experimented for a time with "significant other"). I have been studying, with great pleasure and profit, the latest and the best of the "etiquette" manuals. Written by Judith Martin of the Washington Post, it entitles itself "Miss Manners's Guide to Excruciatingly Correct Behaviour".

The slight archness of the name belies the content. Publishers may feel the need to parody the idea they are marketing, but those who send their queries to Miss Manners are in deadly earnest. What to do about the homosexual couple and the seating plan? Whether or not it is phony to arrange table napkins in the shape of flowers, (Americans are not cursed with the U and non-U dilemma, so words like "serviette" do not lurk in hiding for the unwary. Mind you, the number of ways of avoiding the word "follet" beggars description. And Miss Manners does ask her correspondents to write in blue or black ink on white "writing paper".)

Much of today's social anxiety is sexual and some of it racial. There is some worry about correct modes of address, whether it be Christian names on first meeting or the American tradition of letting all ex-public servants such as "Mr Ambassador" keep their titles into retirement. One

of the most recent nonfiction award (the other categories are, sensibly enough, fiction, literary criticism and poetry with "general literary distinction" prize which is not awarded every year). After a considerable wrangle, the judges chose Robert Caro's biography of Lyndon Johnson over George

Fifty years on: 'Mulliner-Nights'

The *TLS* of February 2, 1933, carried the following review by E. M. Womersley of *Mulliner-Nights* by P. G. Wodehouse:

Mr. Wodehouse is to be found in his latest book administering the mixture as before. It is made up of nine examples of Wodehousery and each deals with an entanglement in which some relative of the multifariously connosed Mr. Mulliner has recently involved himself. One such entanglement arose when the Bishop of Bongo-Bongo, having been called to his See in West Africa, left his cat, Webster, in the care of the relative named, for the duration, Lamcelot. The cat, which was a very old cat, was in words not perhaps subtle or fine, but simple, sensuous and often extremely passionate. Plane, or no plane, you cannot raise your eyebrows at Miss Gladys Bingley, "a charming girl who looked like a pen-wiper", or at "the heavily whiskered old gentleman who reminded [one of Mulliner's relatives] of a burst horse-hair sofa."

companion for a bishop into the sort of cat that one would prefer not to write about. They will object further that the language spoken on the Wodehousian plane does not lend itself to differentiation of character. The Miss Potholewhit who said of "Rue for Remembrance": "Slovely. It lays the soul of Woman bare as with a scalpel," was a barmid; and it was a policeman who, when asked if he was married, replied: "No, lady. I'm just a solitary cat drifting on the river of life." But when you have raised your eyebrows to Webster, in the care of the relative named, for the duration, Lamcelot. The cat, which was a very old cat, was in words not perhaps subtle or fine, but simple, sensuous and often extremely passionate. Plane, or no plane, you cannot raise your eyebrows at Miss Gladys Bingley, "a charming girl who looked like a pen-wiper", or at "the heavily whiskered old gentleman who reminded [one of Mulliner's relatives] of a burst horse-hair sofa."

very moving recent query concerned correct ways of keeping the temper when confronted by supercilious Britons. "Ah, the British", intones Miss Manners before going on to give some very sapient advice about bearing in mind their reduced station. Reading her has sent me back to Mrs Frances Milton Trollope and her *Domestic Manners of the Americans*, published in 1832 to a rollicking furor. Mrs Trollope, mother of Anthony, was a woman of decided opinions, as evidenced in this little glimpse:

Captain All, when asked what appeared to him to constitute the greatest difference between England and America, replied, like a gallant sailor, "the want of loyalty". Were the same question put to me, I should answer "the want of refinement".

Some of the Trollope's observations were fair ("they insist upon eating horrible half-baked hot rolls both morning and evening") and some were prescient (of New York she wrote that "situated on an island, while I think it will one day cover, it rises like Venice, was out of temper and out of sympathy for the duration of her stay. She may have been right about slavery but she was mistaken in saying that "The Americans have certainly not the same *besoin* of being amused as other people; they may be the wiser for this, perhaps, but it makes them less agreeable to a looker-on." The book is an argosy of good things, all the same, and ends with a promise to return and write a more indulgent work if the Americans mend their ways and give more attention to the arts and graces of the "civilized life". If Mrs Trollope could see the exact and fastidious Miss Manners, and remark the wide attention she commands, she might feel vindicated. What might Miss Manners say to this Trollopean vignette, which struck me very forcibly as I was bashing my way up Broadway the other day?

On one occasion we met in Broadway a young Negress in the extreme of fashion, and accompanied by a black beau, whose toilet was equally studied; eye-glass, guard chain, nothing was omitted; he walked beside his sable goddess uncovered, and with an air of the most tender devotion. At the

improvement Time has brought about in such habits, that a moderate statement of the quantity of wine and punch which one man would swallow in the course of a night, without any detriment to his reputation as a perfect gentleman, would seem, in these days, a ridiculous exaggeration.

Competition No 104
Winners: John Rennie
Answers:
1 Each outcry of the hunted hare
A fibre from the brain does tear,
A skylark wounded in the wing,
A cherubim does cease to sing,
William Blake, "Auguries of Innocence".

Entries, marked "Author, Author 108" on the envelope, should be addressed to the Editor, *The Times Literary Supplement*, Priory House, St John's Lane, London EC1M 4BX. The solution and results will appear on March 4.

1 Wine-drinking in England is, after all, only make-believe, a mere playing with an exotic inspiration. Tennyson had his port, whereto clings a good old tradition; sherris sack belongs to a nobler age; these drinks are not for the Let him who will, toy with dubious Bordeaux or Burgundy; to get good of them, soak or gargle; you must be on the green side of thirty. Once or twice they have plucked me from despair; I would not speak unkindly of anything in sack or bottle which bears the great name of wine. But for me it is a thing of days gone by.

2 I like Claret whenever I can have Claret I must drink it. For really it is so fine - it fills the mouth, one's mouth with a gushing freshness - then goes down cool and feverless - then you do not feel it quelling with your liver - no it is rather a Peace maker and lies as quiet as it did in the grape.

3 Those were drinking days, and most men drank hard. So very great is the

window of a handsome house which they were passing, stood a very pretty white girl, with two gentlemen beside her, but alas! both of them had their hats on, and one was smoking!

On the West Coast, from which I am writing these paragraphs, it is extremely difficult to dissociate literary talk from the motion picture business - or "the industry" as everybody refers to it. Some people affect disdain for this relationship, and regard it as vulgar or even corrupt. This is often mistaken when it is not just plain snobishness. Thanks to the energy of Francis Ford Coppola, there will soon be available a film version of the life and work of Yukio Mishima.

Ever since the suicide, his estate and his literary executors have kept a *bushido* face to the world, allowing little or no access to papers and making difficulties about copyrights and permissions. The unconcealed rivalry between Mishima's mother and his widow was another contributory obstruction, as was a general Japanese reticence about the idea of a violent homosexual who wanted to restore Emperor worship and military fascism. (Viewed from California, these sensibilities seem rather more pointed.)

For some time, the director Paul Schrader had been seeking permission to make a Japanese language film about Mishima's life and writing. He is well acquainted with Japan and has a brother and collaborator who is fluent in Japanese. But he was making little headway with the Mishima estate until Coppola took a personal interest in the project. He was well placed to do so, having worked with Kurosawa on *Kagemusha* both as producer and "angel". As a result, it will be announced in Tokyo on February 7 that objections to the making of a film in Japanese - have been withdrawn. The directors will have access and permission. They plan to film the life, and to interview video sequences based on the novels. Where Mishima is clearly the protagonist in the fiction, he will be played by the same actor who takes the bionic role. It will be fascinating to see how the directors manage such scenes as Mishima's discovery of the martyrdom of St Sebastian in *Confessions of a Mask*.

Author, Author
Competition No 108
Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow and to send us the answers so that they reach this office not later than February 25. A prize of £10 is offered for the first correct set of answers opened on that date or failing that the most nearly correct - in which case inspired guesswork will also be taken into consideration.

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Taylor & Francis Ltd
4 John Street, London WC1N 2ET. Tel: 01-405 2237/9.

of it) at the deepest, collective levels of their experience. Correspondingly, the task of the *Passagen-Werk* is to reawaken that experience from its sedimentation, and to incrustations. Phenomena which seem the most distant and obscure – the interior exteriors of the *passages* themselves, the passion for roulette, the vogue for panoramas – may turn out to be the most revelatory. As, according to Novalis, with poetry, so also with Benjamin's *Urgeschichte*: the more personal, local, peculiar, temporal a phenomenon, the closer it may stand to the centre.

Needless to say, this approach places an enormous weight on the concept of experience. There is, inevitably, a certain circularity. The "unseen affinities", referring, as they do, to a subterranean level of awareness, are not such as strike the observer immediately and unambiguously, and what it is their existence which provides Benjamin's concept of experience with its only possible justification. Proof, thus, necessarily makes reference to the reader's own intuition, and

Benjamin acknowledges this in language strikingly reminiscent of Wittgenstein: "Method of this work: literary montage. I have nothing to say – only to show." Yet there is always the worry that what are shown are no more than provoked associations, and that the conviction that they carry comes, ultimately, from the suggestibility (and political commitment) of the reader. The correspondences must be objective if Benjamin's insights are to be said to be part of a genuine contribution to Marxism. But, in the nature of the case, the claim to objectivity must always be precarious.

To see what happens when Marxists abandon this concern for objectivity one need only look at Terry Eagleton's *Walter Benjamin or Towards a Revolutionary Criticism*. A few sentences (on Deleuze) suffice: "It is not surprising, then, that what immediately strikes about the 'puritan' fiction of Deleuze is precisely the weightlessness of its signifiers, which efface themselves in a potentially infinite metonymic chain to yield up all the material immediacy of their

signifieds. Yet this instantly involves us in a contradiction at the very heart of the puritan ideology. For if the 'innocence' of Deleuze's dematerialized writing marks the presence of a privileged autobiographical subject, a lonely Cartesian ego radically anterior to its material embodiments, the same device so foregrounds the material world itself as to threaten constantly to reduce the subject to no more than a reflex or support of it. The subject's epistemological security of position is in contradiction with its 'real' precariousness and contingency.

And so on. The mannerisms of style (the spurious "precisely", sneer-quotes for "real") make the book's intellectual provenance immediately apparent. One doubts whether there is any other tradition in which assertions so sweeping could be advanced in the complete absence of explanation, evidence, or supporting argument. In what sense is Deleuze's writing "dematerialized"? Does that really mean the same as to say that its

"signifiers" are "weightless"? What makes Deleuze's signifiers – more than those of any other writer – members of a "potentially infinite metonymic chain"? And, if they are members of such a chain, how does this make the signifiers "yield up... the material immediacy of their signifieds"? Indeed, how, while one is about it, could "signifieds" – which are concepts, if anything – be "materially immediate"? What is to show that all of this goes to "mark" the presence of a Cartesian – rather, say, than a Berkeleyan or Kantian – subject?

Yet such questions, which arise almost limitlessly on every page of Eagleton's book, are in a sense beside the point. What has happened is that once respectable (if complex) concepts have been stripped of all analytical purchase, swept away into a turbid torrent of pseudo-philosophical cliché. The result is not theory but theoreticism: a "boo-hurrah" vocabulary for talking about literature more obscure, but just as subjective, as anything in the "bourgeois" literary criticism it affects to oppose.

Benjamin's work may be difficult and, for the Anglo-Saxon reader, alien, fortunately, however, it has nothing in common with such slapdash

Of much more value (though, no doubt, less marketable to students of literature with inferiority complexes about philosophy) is Richard Wolin's *Walter Benjamin, an Aesthetic of Redemption*. Simply, clearly and conscientiously, Wolin guides the reader through Benjamin's life and work. What marks the exposition out as an admirable sensitivity in its choice of emphasis (Wolin realizes that it is not always the most celebrated pieces which are most revealing for the development of Benjamin's thought) and an awareness of intellectual affinities not always spotted (for example, to Hamann in the philosophy of language, and to Sorel in political theory). Best of all is that, despite a deep immersion in dense, fearfully complex German texts, Wolin has emerged writing lively, unimpeachable prose. The newcomer to Benjamin's work is here in excellent hands.

ART

Emblems of consciousness

Flint Schler

ARTHUR C. DANTO

The Transfiguration of the Commonplace: A Philosophy of Art
212pp. Harvard University Press.
\$12.25
0 674 90345 5

In this highly amusing philosophical entertainment, Arthur Danto sets out to circumnavigate and define the art-world; by reconstruing those objects which loiter on the verges of art – Duchamp's wretched urinal, Oldenburg's monumental lipstick and complex German texts, Wolin has emerged writing lively, unimpeachable prose. The newcomer to Benjamin's work is here in excellent hands.

Danto's flirtation with the marginal and the eccentric is bound to seem perverse – and I think it is meant to. Once upon a time, aesthetics sought to define art by dwelling on its central instances and asked itself the question: What is it about these instances that manifests the value of art? "Art" was then understood to comprehend those objects which aspire to certain privileged values – beauty, sublimity, significant form and so on. Danto, by contrast, rummages for the nature of art on its outskirts. Offering a painted disc by Picasso or a paint rag to the reader, he asks, "If these things are art, what kind of thing is art?"

It intrigues Danto that such objects may be, indeed usually are, indiscernible from their untransfigured counterparts. Duchamp's urinal is not distinguished from its fellow conveniences by any visible mark of its high station, yet (according to our author) it is art and its counterparts aren't. If two sensibly identical objects occupy distinct rungs on the ontological ladder, one being an artwork, the other a mere thing, you might fancy that the difference between them can't be aesthetically relevant. That this is not so is something which Danto, to his credit, sees. An object need not betray its aesthetic properties to the casual glance. There are some values which no untrained eye can detect nor mere thing embody; only an emanation of consciousness can be informed by "style", "expression" and "aesthetic values" which art has the unique good fortune to embody. Yet it is always possible for such an object to have a merely real Doppelgänger. What a work has in common with its merely real counterpart we may call its medium. The implication is that the

work is something over and above its material embodiment (or perhaps less excitingly, that it is merely that embodiment viewed from a certain angle).

Danto's argument builds up to a stunning climax: the work of art is an emblem of consciousness. The work is not an object in the world (though its substrate may be); say rather that it is a mode of fastening our attention on to that aspect of the world. It is in this sense that an art-work, like a Sartrean or Parmenidean consciousness, is not an object of consciousness (and so not a real thing). Artists don't see their style, they see through it. When an artist grows conscious of his style, it is no longer his style and, unless he moves beyond it, his old style becomes an affectation. Danto tosses in the Hegelian reminder that the style of an age is visible only to its successors. So far from their being objects of aesthetic appreciation, the properties which qualify an object as art are precisely those which the artist and his contemporaries cannot see, since they are modes and not objects of contemporary vision.

From this brief summary, it should be obvious that Danto's is no ordinary work of analytic philosophy, but rather yet another deposit of the Owl of Minerva. Still, the grand themes are supposed to be sustained by argument and, at the risk of spoiling the fun, some unresolved tensions in that argument deserve mention. For example, in his rhapsodic finale, Danto

takes metaphors to be, well, metaphors for art-works. Just as the metaphor can't replace the metaphor, so the description of a work, however illuminating, can't supersede it. But can Danto possibly argue that Duchamp's urinal, or any one of the minimalist and dada objects that through his eclectic canvas, is irreplaceable? Surely Duchamp could have taken a grinder at the art-world with any old urinal; nor is it obvious that the impact of the urinal would be much greater than a story about an artist who is idiotic enough to place a urinal on display. Whether or not Duchamp's joke is worth dwelling on – and it is rather limp by now – his urinal certainly isn't. That it is not a possible object of aesthetic experience is precisely what makes the urinal such a suitable vehicle for Duchamp's anti-art gesture – but anti-art is just what there is no room for in Danto's scheme.

Much the same point applies to the emanations of that figment of Borges's imagination, Pierre Menard, who sets out to write a word-for-word duplicate of *Quixote*, as being composed by a twentieth-century symbolist, must have quite a different meaning from the original. The labour of Menard would have been pointless: it is enough to read *Quixote* as though it had been written by him; indeed, it is enough to read Borges's story.

This is in itself a minor tension in Danto's work, but it is symptomatic of a more important flaw: Danto's inability or unwillingness to appreciate

the traditional "aesthetic" definition of art. Danto adverts to this Kantian notion but he consistently undercuts it. In the tradition, art-work is an object which stakes a claim on our appreciation, something which is informed by the desire to be an object and occasion of an experience which is valuable in itself (rather than for some practical utility). No one would think Duchamp's urinal makes any such claim, so the traditional theory provides a space for such anti-art objects. They aren't mere things, but then again they aren't – don't want to be – art.

Danto rejects the aesthetic approach to art for two reasons, neither of them convincing. First, there is the obvious point that an art-work can't just be defined as a suitable object for aesthetic appreciation, since we appreciate many natural objects. But it is obvious that works can be distinguished from mere things in terms of their intentionality: art-works are designed to be appreciated, natural objects aren't (pace Archdeacon Paley). Danto's second objection is the more serious one that we can't say what it is for an experience to be aesthetic without first knowing what art is. But all he shows is that we can't know how to appreciate an object unless we know whether it is an art-work or a mere thing; but from this it doesn't follow that we are unable to define aesthetic

appreciation until we first define art. Danto's only real argument against the aesthetic definition of art is fallacious.

Nor is his claim that an artist's style is transparent to his contemporaries at all credible: some art may ask us to imagine away the canvas and the brush-strokes and to make-believe that we are just looking at the represented object, but even this art asks to be appreciated reflectively for its power to enact this fiction. Nor is there any obvious place in Danto's scheme for the pleasure we take in the brush-strokes of Rembrandt or the theatrical bravura of Tiepolo. In this respect, art seems to be unlike a state of visual consciousness. When we are visually attending to an object, we can't also be attending to our state of mind (on this spurious basis Comte erected his rejection of psychology). But surely the peculiar satisfaction of a painting consists in just this: that we can be simultaneously aware of the medium and of what something looks like from a certain point of view. The content of a picture also presents a dual object of attention; we both look make-believe at the object and at how it would look from a certain point of view. Depiction is thus an expression of visual consciousness and no mere analogue of it. And this it is which explains why a representation of an object can't be superseded by the experience of it.

To withstand the Flood

Anthony Thorlby

GERSHOM SCHOLEM

Walter Benjamin: The Story of a Friendship.
242pp. Faber. £10.
0 4571 11970 0

This history of the remarkable friendship between Gershom Scholem and Walter Benjamin was published in 1975 in German; then, translated into English, in America in 1981; now here. A lifelong relationship between two writers of such distinction must necessarily be of interest, whatever its nature and content. Much of it is already on record, because correspondence came with the years to be a more frequent and extensive form of contact than meeting. Two further factors raise the interest of this relationship above the purely personal, moreover. The first lies in the tragic history of the period: both men were German Jewish intellectuals. The very index of this volume reads like the roll-call of a doomed generation. The other factor is less historical than philosophical, though its philosophical character is not speculative or technical, but practical and potentially dangerous.

For it was often, though by no means exclusively, in the minds of Jewish intellectuals that elements came together, which were liable to release tremendous ideological energy. Their combination led to a kind of fissile capable of destroying modern: liberal culture – and, civilization. These elements may be termed loosely religion and revolution. They sound so reassuringly distinct that nothing more would seem to be necessary, to avoid danger, than to recognize them for what they are – one spiritual and otherworldly, the other material and this-worldly – and keep them safely apart. But it is possible also to argue that this difference is merely metaphorical, the product of two different ways of thinking about the same thing. If this is so, then, to elaborate on the model of nuclear physics, it is in fact the same element which is brought together, to create a critical mass and generates such colossal destructive power. For centuries, matter and spirit, body and soul, have been regarded as being forever separate (until the Last Day). The search for the element of sameness in them, and for the possibility of state of unity by means of progressive dialectical interactions, has provided the intellectual stimulation for much of the most radical thinking in Europe during the past two centuries and given it its frequently apocalyptic tone.

It makes little difference whether the sameness is thought to be essentially spiritual, in the manner of Hegel, or essentially material, in the manner of Marx. For Benjamin, the single element was language; he rejected the commonsense view that in its nonverbal things express themselves through immaterial words. It is this experimentation with one universal element, and the combination of increasing amounts of it derived from different sources, through reductive

critique, subconscious association, and postclassical dialectic, which leads to apocalypse. Kafka, for instance, whom Scholem and Benjamin discussed with the intuitive understanding of men working in the same medium as he had, declared that there is nothing besides the spiritual world. But the spirit was that of hell; and Benjamin fell victim to it when it possessed the continent of Europe. Not surprisingly, neither Scholem nor Benjamin had much time for the pious platitudes of Max Brod about the spirituality of Kafka.

Scholem's book is strangely subdued, often briefly factual, and reserved in its comments. He knew, of course, when writing it, that much of what he had thought about Benjamin's ideas could already be consulted by German readers in one edition of their correspondence with the prospect of a second and fuller one to come. Or they might read an article like "Walter Benjamin und sein Engel", which penetrates more deeply into the workings of his friend's mind than any section of this book. (It offers a brilliant analysis of the significance which Paul Klee's picture "Angelus novus" held for Benjamin, who for many years had it on his wall and even crammed it into his suitcase when he fled from Paris.) It is necessary to look up a letter Scholem merely refers to, if one wants to appreciate the quality of thought that lies behind such a phrase as "a sharp, frontal attack on religion" (Benjamin's new shift and position). The shift in question is Benjamin's move towards Marxism, which had become evident in his commentaries on Brecht and his long essay on Karl Kraus. Scholem's attack had indeed been sharp, but much less a bare protest than the one word "frontal" suggests. He had accused Benjamin of self-deception then, as he does again in more muted ways here, and warned him against it. But the letter goes into considerable detail in order to explicate the contrast and – in Scholem's view – incompatibility between Benjamin's real way of thinking and his newly feigned one.

Much can be gleaned elsewhere in this book of the circumstances, readings and conversations which Benjamin's earlier, or "real" cast of mind had been formed. From the first, he had been interested in the totality of experience; that is, with the forms of "man's intellectual and psychological connection with the world". Language and art were to him the most revealing points of connection and coalescence between spirit and nature. Needless to say, he was reading Kant and Nietzsche. He went so far as to "accept" myth alone as "the world" and it was not long before he became, as he and for a long time an adherent of mystical views of language. For Benjamin in his youth (and for Scholem all his life), the ultimate secret of both myth and language lay in the Bible; Judaism offered the best point of departure for understanding it. Scholem is able to quote from a diary entry he made at the time:

Benjamin's mind revolves and will long continue to revolve around, the phenomenon of myth, which he approaches from the most diverse angles: from history... from literature... from religion... If

ever have a philosophy of my own, he said to me, it somehow will be a philosophy of Judaism.

This was Benjamin's "real" way of thinking, in Scholem's view, and in 1931 his friend seemed to him to be betraying it. We get glimpses of "very different points of view" already in the early 1920s. Not directly on the subject of politics but on the relationship between historical circumstances, use of language, and religious truth. "We discussed the thesis whether the Jews' special attachment to the world of language might be traced to their thousands of years of occupation with sacred texts, with revelation as the linguistic basic fact and its reflection in all spheres of language." There was even "heated debate" about Karl Kraus's "attitude toward, indeed addiction to, language". Scholem reports simply that Benjamin often asked him to elaborate in writing on his reflections on "the derivation of Kraus's style from the Hebrew prose and poetry of medieval Jewry, the language of the great halakists and the 'mosaic' style, the poetic prose in which linguistic scraps of sacred texts are whirled around kaleidoscope-like, and are journalistically, polemically, descriptively, and even erotically profaned." It was not Scholem but Benjamin who elaborated on this technique, which helped him find his own style: the style which enabled him to cross the divide between aestheticism and worldliness, spirituality and social criticism – and present it as a form of dialectical materialism. The very style to which Scholem objected.

Scholem's book is informative, and indirectly revealing, especially about the early years. He mentions the grounds of Benjamin's interest in Nietzsche as the only person in the nineteenth century who had seen experience historically. Burckhardt's ethic, by contrast, was not that of history, but of humanism: a perceptive distinction, which also points forward. Another note made by Scholem at the time was: "He is sailing full speed into the system." The system was the typically dialectical one which German intellectuals of that generation employed to bring together the most primitive epochs of world history and the "world" of personal creativity, intelligence, and what these socially alienated, cerebral men called "experience". They began from a conception of the spectral, an age or state still accessible in dreams and clairvoyance about which "Benjamin reads me a lengthy note". Scholem recalls. Then came the myth, whose real content was the enormous revolution that politicized against the spectral and brought its age to an end. Myth was still "demonic", however, and there had to come a necessary third stage, the age of "revelation" – which I proposed calling the messianic age instead. Scholem points out that here was the genesis of reflections "he made many years later in his notes 'Lehre vom Ebnlichkeit'. In two dense sentences that follow, Scholem suggests that learning to "read" the world's surface, on the basis of linguistically conceived, similarities between things, broke the demonic secret of myth in the same way that

"the revelation of Holy Writ" had done.

These men were debating in effect what half a century later has become familiar in the no less revolutionary vocabularies of linguistics, structuralism, deconstruction, and the like; and debating it with a better grasp of what they were doing. Not that Scholem was a revolutionary; the study of Judaism's relationship to myth became for him a matter of most scholarly research. But for Benjamin, this "reading in the configurations of the surface" and his stylistic experiments with the magical origins and potential of writing, did have revolutionary implications, providing him with the most powerful source of literary-prophetic inspiration.

Many elements of Benjamin's later work appear, then, to have been present from the beginning: his sense of history, language, and dialectic, as well as his tendency towards system. The importance of Scholem's book lies less in its attempt to separate as much as possible of the "real" Benjamin from Marxist materialism, than in its (perhaps unintentional) indication of the explosive combination of religion and revolution that lay ready to hand for minds able to think in this apocalyptic way. Was the break in Benjamin's career so marked, so unforeseeable, or so hypocritical as Scholem seems to have found it? Moral reprimand was at all events inadequate to stop an inherent momentum and development in his ideas. And where else on earth could they, in the 1930s, possibly go? "From my very particular position in language philosophy", Benjamin wrote, "to the perspective of dialectical materialism there is a way across (Vermittlung), even though it is a taut and problematic one. To the saturated condition of bourgeois scholarship, however, there is certainly not one. There was perhaps a third move possible, which Scholem made when he went to Palestine. Benjamin was tempted by it; the strange story of why it never could be arranged appears here to have been due less to deviousness (as has been suggested), than to Benjamin's reluctance to give up the dangerous transition and fed between ground where his genius fed. Scholem passed such severe judgment on his friend: from his committed situation in Jericho; he wrote with the assurance of a man who had put behind him the impermissible dialectical play with contraries that was to destroy Europe.

How well Scholem understood the brilliant opportunities for devastating effects which that contrariety offered: "Your work acquires the stamp of adventurousness, of fascinating strangeness, ambiguity, dangerous acrobatics... Your dynamic could well be recognized by a [mere] materialist party member with no more powerful than his own." And Scholem has been proved right by the tremendous "fascination" which Benjamin has exercised over the minds of the non-Party Left in the West in recent decades. His challenge to Benjamin, that he should see what would happen if he tried to work within the Party, could be addressed to many of the intellectuals who admire him.

The author has captured in a book which has constructed like an ark – that which can withstand the Flood, that as the Jews took refuge from the persecutions in the Writ, the canonical book, Benjamin's own book constituted a saving element. Did it? Can it?

The word he uses to describe the mixture of verbal and intellectual categories which lends Benjamin's writings their alluring shimmer is most telling: *Interferenzerscheinungen* – the sparks and sparkle where interference of one mode of writing and thinking with another takes place.

By contrast, Scholem is somewhat simplistic in suggesting that his friend was guilty of a moral error: namely, self-deception. It may be true that there is no other way of keeping clear of a mire in which one can only sink, than by wise resolve. But Benjamin was no hypocrite and did not enjoy the best of both worlds. Moral criticism might even be thrown back at Scholem, by saying that he opted out, retreating from the most problematic area of modern thought. Benjamin was right: there is a way across from the philosophy of language to dialectical materialism, or (if that word has to be reserved for orthodox Marxists only) to revolutionary radicalism, as the subsequent development of language-based criticism has shown. A mature amongst the most gifted and most catching Western intellectuals; the book has yet to be written which analyses why this is possible and what exactly is wrong with it. Scholem did not write it, least of all in this retreat story of a friendship, but he reminds us of how much one is needed. That friendship itself, between the scholar who left the arena and the writer who stayed to become the sacrificial victim of a tragically flawed intelligence, tradition and society, contains the essence of the problem. Perhaps there can be no other solution than to draw a line under the failed experiment in resolving the human condition by non-religious means.

A religious need and a secularized religious answer, a religiosity that is metaphorical and poetic (and known to be such); must not that state of affairs, that intolerable spiritual tension, be a necessary close, "while there is still time", as Scholem once said to Benjamin? Or is it the ineluctable condition of creativity in the present time? Can the Word – should it have capital as it does in some contexts here – if it has the power to save, rest on the genius and the torment of a *littérateur*? Or on the (second) literature which Benjamin was capable of understanding with something of the mystical reverence and awe which with contraries that was to destroy Europe.

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Lines of identity

Andrew Lincoln

MORRIS EAVES

William Blake's Theory of Art
217pp. Guildford: Princeton University Press. £13.90 (paperback, 62p).
0 691 03990 9

T. S. Eliot once compared Blake's philosophy to a piece of home-made furniture put together out of odds and ends found lying about the house. Now that scholars have reclaimed more of its contemporary context, Blake's thought seems like a complete rebuilding of the house itself from the original materials. In this study, Morris Eaves contributes to the process of reclamation, arguing that Blake's aesthetic theory re-establishes Enlightenment principles on romantic grounds.

Eaves begins by examining the relationship between Blake's advocacy of the "wiry bounding line" and the preference for line over colour in contemporary aesthetic doctrine. In Blake's thought, he suggests, line is associated not simply with intellect, but with the imaginative "identity" of the artist, and thus Blake's theory of art is expressive, "opposed at all essential points to classical and neoclassical mimesis". Working outwards from artist to works to audience, Eaves examines in detail the implications of this theory, offering a

corrective to those critics who see Blake "as part of neoclassicism in the visual arts or of Wordsworthian-romanticism in literature".

When he considers the ideas that Blake attacked – for example, Reynolds's view that invention can be taught, and that the arts are progressive – Eaves is vigorously critical, often penetrating. The unquestioned assumption that the form and content of a work may be separated for analytical purposes is examined with unflinching tenacity, and Eaves effectively exposes the unresolved contradictions that arise from it in the writings of modern critics, who praise the vision of Blake's art while lamenting the lack of technical merit.

But Eaves's approach to Blake's own thought seems less critical. His intention to "establish with some system and documentation what had previously been established piecemeal" entails a preference for a "monolithic" Blake, whose various and sometimes fragmentary comments on art can be reassembled into a single, coherent theory. Eaves finds the basis of such coherence in the principle of imaginative "identity" which is too completely most other aspects of Blake's thought. The principle becomes, for example, the basis of a beguilingly simple distinction between Coleridge (who is interested in the processing that the imagination does) and Blake (who is interested in what

the imagination is), a distinction which is not qualified by reference to Blake's poetry, where descriptions of imaginative processes, of labour at furnaces and at looms, become increasingly important. Eaves's references to Blake's practices as an artist and poet are in fact highly selective, and are used to illustrate rather than to test his own assumptions. Blake's large colour paintings, for example, which probably are easily reconciled with Eaves's central thesis: if such prints reveal the true imaginative identity of Blake "then they may be more linear in Blake's sense of the term than Flaxman's outlines, which by and large seem less autobiographic than Blake's colour prints". (We may wonder whether, on similar grounds, the "unoriginal" Blots & Blurs of Robert & Thomas should be regarded as more linear than Blake's prints.) Eaves simply will not allow the coherence of his exposition to be disturbed by a serious examination of the developments, changes of direction and inconsistencies that other critics have found in Blake's work. As a result, his discussion remains theoretical in a limiting sense.

There is much of interest in this provocative and energetic study, but when the relationship between theory and practice has been examined more closely, the view of Blake that emerges may be rather more complicated than the one presented here.

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254pp. Macmillan. £15.
0 333 25701 4

H. G. Wells was "small, sickly, common, selfish, vain, angry" and possessed by a "perpetually vibrating physical and sexual vanity", according to an outraged discarded mistress, Odette Keun, a Fabian champion, he won Beatrice Webb's disapproval for his "dining with duchesses and lurching with countesses" and wrung a howl from the heart of the lovely Amber Reeves, with whom he had eloped to La Touque, because "He kept hankering to go back whenever he got invitations from Lady Desborough or anyone." A tubby prophet of the coming harmony of the World State, he had a petulant contempt for his fellow workers-for-peace which pulled the pin on committee after idealistic committee. A would-be hard-headed politician, he met Stalin (Wells: "I have come to you to ask you what you are doing to change the world." Stalin: "Not so very much"), declared him to be "essentially self-critical and modest" and reported that "no one is afraid of him and everybody trusts him". Believing the individual to be of little moment and the species to be of paramount importance, Wells allowed himself to cut loose from the painful social origins which were the source of his early inspiration, and from his hard-won biological knowledge. Into a stratosphere from which he could tell Beatrice Webb "I would rather be after God's pattern, gross, various, fecund and comprehensive, inexact and continually unexpected." All of which makes him, in retrospect, an immensely likeable man.

But while it is true enough, as Chesterton remarked, that Wells "sold his birthright for a pot of messianic", the size of his early gift is more than large enough for us to forget his later career, to honour him for the *Kliffs*-world novels and, a far more remarkable achievement, for the scientific romances, and especially for *The Time Machine*, the greatest piece of science fiction yet written.

In *H. G. Wells and the Culminating Age* Peter Kemp traces Wells's career with a light touch, making gossipy and entertaining connections between life and work, keeping his hero at a distance, pursuing his personal foibles and intellectual inconsistencies with guarded amusement. But if you come to this book, as I did, excited by its subtitle and expecting to discover how Wells read Darwin; if and when he read Wallace and whether he

believed in the latent adaptation of the brain; if Galton and Pearson had any place in his prescription for the breeding programme of the race or Weismann in his imagined mechanism of heredity; whether Spencer or Bain or Maudsley or Ribot affected his picture of the evolution of the emotions or of the workings of memory or the unconscious; or if Lubbock or Tylor or Frazer moulded his image of savage societies, you will be disappointed, and annoyed.

How general were Wells's ideas of biological degeneration? Was he impressed by Nordau? What did he think of the re-discovery of Mendel's work and particulate genetics? Might we, at the very least, expect to find *The Descent of Man* on his bedside table? Does Darwin's conviction, for instance, that sexual selection had made man more advanced than woman lie behind Wells's more belligerent pronouncements on the subject? Did Wells half-agree with his own Dr Martineau in *The Secret Places of the Heart* that "women were quite incapable of producing ideas in the same way that men do" and believe that scientific orthodoxy was on his side?

Peter Kemp appears to be unaware of the size and the interest of the subject he proposes for him the biological themes in H. G. Wells are simply man's need "to eat, mate, find a congenial habitat, and survive danger - by fighting, escaping, or co-operating with the other members of his species", which is like announcing that Henry James pursues chemical themes because all his characters take in oxygen. However, if we wave goodbye to an opportunity to bring the murky fears of the *fin de siècle* to life via one of its great representative figures in the history of contemporary popular ideas, and remain content to allow this thin biology to be but a convenient framework for "critical" literary discussion, Kemp has many interesting insights to offer us.

There are other cheering compensations, too. I much enjoyed learning that Odette Keun, rightly impressed by the genius of the early Wells, expressed her literary acumen in a stirring, pioneer exercise in Practical Criticism. At their first meeting, in a darkened hotel bedroom in Geneva, she submitted to the author and his work. "I did not know whether he was a giant or a gnome," she wrote, "but it did not matter." It may have mattered in the morning; but then her chance of matching his own desires were equally small. For Wells's sexual tastes were formed early, by a close scrutiny of Britannia, "bare armed, bare necked, showing beautiful bare bosoms, revealing shining thighs", in *Punch*; and so he craved, as he wished,

fulfillingly proclaimed to Rebecca West in 1917, greater satisfactions than Isabel, or Miss Kingsmill (who came to the Wellses' house to retouch negatives), or Catherine Robbins, or Amber Reeves, or Rebecca West herself, or Odette Keun, could provide for, he hoped:

I am a Male
I am a Male
I am a MALE
I have got Great Britain Pregnant

But to begin with the eating - "butter" was the first word Wells wrote, as Kemp tells us, and it was a thought which stayed with him until he died. Between whiles, in *Bealby*, he left instructions for his own preparation: "It should ever fall to my lot to be cooked, may I be fried in potatoes and butter. May I be fried with potatoes and good butter made from the milk of the cow. God send I am spared boiling; the prison of the pot, the rattling lid, the evil darkness, the greasy water." Kemp (his prose only occasionally itself becoming borborygm with half-digested words of card-index) sensibly pursues Wells's fierce interest in food to the small boy in the dank basement kitchen of Atlas House - the absurdly misnamed little shop in Bromley where his father, a part-time professional cricketeer, and his mother, an ex-housekeeper, attempted to make a living by selling china plates and cups and saucers. Wells, mildly starved by his family's poverty and mildly poisoned by his mother's atrocious cooking, suffered alternate pains of hunger and indigestion, and he always attributed his stunted growth to the early chaos in his stomach. Peter Kemp believes that, together with his early habitat, it was in fact responsible for a great deal more.

Combine the Atlas House basement, the underground passages (complete with ventilation shafts) used by the household staff at Upmark (where Mrs Wells eventually returned to service), the subterranean rooms of his London aunts with whom he lodged as a student, even the below-street debating theatre of the Normal School of Science itself, with Wells's unease about eating, and the Morlocks, the proletarian glow-stairs, the hidden mechanicals in the engine-room, the downtrodden miners who only clamber out of the earth at night, the rat-like tenders of the new city sewers, spring to life. H. G. Wells's tentacle-fingered engineers and master-cannibals of the future are compounded of more homely inspirations than we might have supposed.

All of which is probably true; but then Bernard Bergonzi was the first to say so, in his pioneer work *The Early H. G. Wells: a Study of the Scientific Romances* (1961), which Kemp does not mention, even in his bibliography. Bergonzi also pointed out that *The Time Machine* abounds in paradisaical and demoniac imagery, and that the Time Traveller's descent from the pastoral playground of the terminally decadent, sexually ambiguous, vegetarian, anti-industrial Eliot (who more or less limit their activity to "faint squirms of idyllic petting" as V. S. Pritchett remarked) to the underworld of the Morlocks is a journey of almost undisturbed mythical significance, resonant with literary memories. And into it, having just stepped off his (albeit rather special) 1890s bicycle, goes a significantly well-informed, amiable, gregarious, interested, late-Victorian bourgeois clubman.

There are many other fascinating but less general "biological themes" in *The Time Machine* which Kemp might have investigated. In *The Origin of Species*, for example, Darwin discusses, with great excitement, the special adaptations of cave-dwelling animals, those creatures from "the outer world" who have withdrawn, down the generations, "into the deeper and deeper recesses of the Kentucky caves", species which he imagines spectrally shaping their globular eyes unseen through the ages (or losing them altogether) and free of the selection pressures for the colours of camouflage or display, shedding their pigment, turning ghostly white. Are they, too, part of the intellectual ancestry of the Morlocks? They share with them, after all, as H. G. Wells writes, that "bleached look common in

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Meeting the market

Mark Casserley

RICHARD H. TAYLOR

The Neglected Hardy: Thomas Hardy's Lesser Novels
205pp. Macmillan. £17.50.
0 333 31051 9

Hardy's reputation as a novelist, Richard H. Taylor suggests, is based on only half his output, the other being regarded as mistakes or experiments. Taylor believes that the novels ought to be read as a whole, and that these neglected works "may an essential part in the dynamic process of Hardy's fiction". He therefore sets out to estimate the value of each of the "lesser" novels, how they are related to the more famous works, what themes they have in common, and what can be learnt from them about Hardy's development.

The novels in question span Hardy's career, from the appearance of *Desperate Remedies* to the book publication of *The Well-Beloved*. Taylor is particularly interesting on the artistic and economic constraints Hardy faced throughout: in a sense, all the novels were pot-bollers, written to earn Hardy's living, and he had to pay careful attention to the susceptibilities of his editors and the public who read serials. Hardy's relationship with this public was a troubled one for other reasons, however: in the early novels, as Taylor shows, he was feeling his way towards a style and a method, and at the same time trying to escape from the limiting aesthetic expectations of his readers, without losing their allegiance. Many of the lesser works, according to Taylor, were affected by these external pressures, which forced Hardy to compromise his artistic intentions. The major novels were either strong enough for the controversial aspects to appear unimportant, or were defended more vigorously by their author.

A *Laodicean* presents an interesting case. Taylor shows how circumstances militated against its being a success: Hardy's serious illness of 1880-81 had much to do with its shortcomings, since in order to fulfil his contract he had to continue the novel by dictating to his wife. It begins promisingly, with an intimacy in the depiction of George Somerset, and a subtle blend of the early serious and the later successes, and the intellectual and social conflicts that are one in the novel, are dispensed by an excess of plotting. Taylor focuses on the struggle between the modern

most animals that live largely in the dark - the white fish of the Kentucky caves, for instance" and, "living in... impenetrable darkness" the eyes of the Morlocks "were abnormally large and sensitive, just as are the pupils of the abysmal fishes, and they reflected the light in the same way."

But then Kemp has given himself, or his publisher has allowed him, little space for such leisurely speculation. About 110 other books by Wells clamour for his attention. They stretch from *A Text Book of Biology* (1893) to *Mind at the End of Its Tether* (1945). Behind the brilliant young romantic scientist (whose enormous wealth came almost at once - in France alone, the fortunes of Mercure de France were founded on sales of *The Time Machine*), beside the one or two good schoolmasters (*The Outline of History*, *A Short History of the World*), there are a great many trampish-looking characters, starving crows in grubby mackintoshes, wild-eyed World-Staters in sandals, and also slightly seedy and exceedingly angry middle-aged men with nothing of much substance to say. But Peter Kemp is almost uniformly kind; he houses them all with sustained enthusiasm.

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spirit and "medievalism", but he amplifies the importance of these issues beyond anything justified by the novel. Indeed, this is one of the reasons for its "lesser" status. In the major works, the author's design is fruitfully read as an inescapable "given" of the situation. Integral to the world-view the novel presents. But Taylor's particular approach does enable him to bring out thematic connections with more famous novels: Sue Bridehead in Paula Powers' "spiritual successor", for example.

The Well-Beloved is even more closely related to *Jude the Obscure*. Passages from the serial version of the novel were adapted for its successor, and these excisions weakened the book. Taylor sees the hero's predicament in terms of the search for a Platonic Ideal in his beloved. He tries to present Pierston's fate as a tragic one, but the novel is not quite recognizable from his account of it, which short-circuits Hardy's own adjustments of attitude to the characters. It is noteworthy that Pierston consents his obsession. He is anxious not to lose it, because it protects him from commitment.

Hardy's bitterly ironic attitude to his own career in prose and to his "good-life young critics" lies behind the revised ending of *The Well-Beloved*, with Pierston losing all aesthetic feeling and having extreme old age, rather unceremoniously thrust upon him. Taylor documents the limiting circumstances within which that career proceeded, and Hardy's changes of direction from novel to novel, but he is less successful in showing the "dynamic process" at work. One wants to hear more than just that there is a "pivotal" connection between some of Hardy's concerns at a particular time, and his current novel. Taylor believes that Hardy's novels should be read as "symbolic poems" (the meaning of this phrase is not clear), but this should not preclude close examination of narrative technique and the handling of character. That the lesser novels form a distinct aesthetic group is not finally proven, and the assertion that they "form a series of essential pivots on which Hardy's entire career as a novelist turns" is only partially convincing; they are often experimental in nature, but the same might be said of a number of the major novels. Nevertheless, as a survey of Hardy's work, this book is useful, and the lesser novels are well handled, rather than a consistent argument. The Taylor book reveals how much interest the lesser novels possess, with many remarkable passages and a full measure of Hardy's aggressive quirkiness. "Neglect" no longer seems an appropriate response.

Crisis around the cradle

Rosemary Dinnage

CHRISTINA HARDYMENT

Dream Babies: Child Care from Locke to Spock
134pp. Cape. £9.95.
0 224 01910 4

Parents bemused by the spate of books on child care, the gulf between their own upbringing and their children's, and the overwhelming modern sense of responsibility for them, will find *Dream Babies* reassuring as well as amusing. Christina Hardyment has written it, she says, to demonstrate how shifting and relative the apparently authoritative canons of child care are: taking your methods straight from the book, she says, is about as sensible as sending for your false teeth by mail order.

Christina Hardyment's account is also a counterbalance to the school of historians who have shocked us with evidence of past brutality to children and concluded that tenderness towards the young is a twentieth-century invention. In many cases, as she says, this is like using the records of the NSPCC as evidence of modern child-care practice. In fact there has always been cruelty to children - as well as exceptional devotion - sometimes unconscious and sometimes deliberate; our own century's particular version emerges very clearly from her story.

This is not to say that there is no substance in the evidence amassed by historians of childhood, nor to deny that our predecessors in this, as in so many things, were not better or worse, just utterly different. They did not make the absolute distinction that we do between abortion and infanticide, and of course they had no firm expectation that a small child would survive for long. Hence the account by Roswell, a fond father, of the death of one of his babies:

He expired a little before nine. I was as calm as I could wish, and resigned to the dispensations of GOD... There was something of dreariness in the blank in our nursery. Yet the gentle death of the sweet innocent, and his appearance like waxwork and at peace after his sufferings, affected us pleasantly... Worthy Grange, who had been up last night and shown friendly concern dined with us. He and I drank chiefly cider and were very comfortable. I was even in admirable spirits, moderated by the death of my child. I uttered several lively sayings, some of them indeed prompted by him, which will be found in my *Boswelliana*.

Christina Hardyment starts her history about the middle of the eighteenth century, with the midwife delivered, swaddled, breast-fed by mother or wet-nurse) infant, dirty and dandled, cosy but dispensable. The forerunners, at this period, of modern baby books were pamphlets of elementary hygiene for nurses in charge of the great numbers of foundlings thrown up by eighteenth-century urban conditions. Such publications were concerned only with physical well-being; the true influence, later in the century, was a moral and philosophical one - Rousseau's *Emile*. Rousseau's own children, as is well known, were all sent to the foundling hospital, where perhaps someone was trying to keep his babies alive with a French version of one of these ideal manuals.

The combined brutality and idealism of the eighteenth century is perhaps a little too strange for us to grasp. But the next period that Hardyment rules out, 1820-70, looks strikingly more like our own. By this time books for mothers - often written by mothers - had become a new genre, and there were a number of magazines of child care. Mothers, much more than in the rough old times, were seen as moulders of human beings; and most classes, as Hardyment points out, did not turn children over to domestics; nursemaids helped out, but the age of the omnipotent nanny was yet to come. Mothers must cherish and educate and instil morality; it was a long way from the eighteenth-century notion that there was nothing particular to do but "keep the child sweet and clean; to

tumble it and toss it about a good deal play with it, and keep it in good humour."

At the same time, with the age of real and pseudo-scientific discovery approaching, the earliest signs of what Hardyment calls a "mythology of neglect" were appearing. Both tender and tough approaches had their advocates, as always; some of the latter were now proposing three-hourly feeds, cold baths, a little salutary crying, a separate cot for baby instead of mother's or nursemaid's bed. The introduction of the pram around the 1850s truly distanced the child from other human bodies. The great age of official harshness was, however, still to come.

Late Victorian to Edwardian times swung a little further against the primacy of the child. Like the eighteenth-century woman of fashion, the Edwardian lady had a demanding social life; but she could turn the child over to nanny and to bottle-feeding rather than to wet-nurse, which on the whole gave it a better chance of survival in spite of unhygienic early feeding-bottles. Feminism and the New Woman had arrived, and even birth control (it was in the 1870s that Annie Besant and Charles Bradlaugh were prosecuted for their family planning pamphlet, vaguely but delightfully titled *The Fruits of Philosophy*). Having been entreated to immerse themselves in the nursery, women were now exhorted not to be so sloppy. "Do not drown in your child", exhorted one expert; "Infants up to the age of one year old should be neither

amusing nor amused", declared another crisply. Yet around this same time, and even before the turn of the century, children were being studied closely and carefully and literally as never before, and never again until quite recently. These celebrated hour-by-hour accounts were carried out by amateurs and are still fascinating. Darwin - in child development certainly an amateur - had his own "Biographical Sketch of an Infant" published in *Mind*.

What now approached was our own period of maximum self-consciousness about the upbringing of children. The twentieth century might - and to the historians of childhood does seem to be the age of the child. Child labour abolished; lady philanthropists taking notions of hygiene into the slums; education free and universal; corporal punishment in disfavour, and the movement for kindergartens and educational play under way. But all this good sense and rationality also led right away from childhood's irrational needs, for comfort and contact and security; affection was to become confounded with regressiveness and lack of hygiene.

There were many contributory reasons. The germ theory of disease revolutionized child care but also brought all kinds of things into disfavour, from kissing to warm nurseries. Hospitals had become safe and clean, but routines suitable for mass care of the sick were transferred - officially, at any rate - to the home. With hospital nursing a respectable profession, the first training colleges;

for nursery nurses were founded, where the natural impulse of woman-child bonding was generally educated out of existence. Touching, the child's *modus vivendi* and lifeline, was under a taboo. Solitude, fresh air, feeding by the clock and absence of "stimulation" (play) convinced "unwashed babies" of their essential unimportance during the long, hungry night-time sessions of "crying it out". And the establishment of norms, which are no more than averages for developmental milestones, led to weighing and measuring and anxiety and, of course, ferocious toilet training.

Freud made an inadvertent contribution to it all via the misconception that, since neurotics have disturbed parental relations, the solution is to cut out parenting. The behaviourists, Watson and Skinner, certainly contributed via Watson's *Psychological Care of the Infant and Child* (become "a professional, not a sentimentalist masquerading under the name of Mother") and Skinner's "Heir Conditioner", the "Skinner box" he invented to a fanfare of publicity for the cradle-less, touch-free baby. And Truby King, the New Zealander whose rigid methods ruled nurseries for thirty years, contributed most of all. Christina Hardyment is charitable about Truby King, but then she is not a product of the Truby King era.

She rounds off her account with a substantial section on the "enjoy-yourself" child-care books of today - Spock, Jolly, Leach *et al*. She has, of course, her omissions and her prejudices. She has rather a down on

nice Penelope Leach, and is not reverent enough, in my opinion, towards the Blessed Benjamin Spock. On the other hand, she has a soft spot for Mrs Sydney Frankenburg (1930-1940ish), with her lunatic ideas about dressing up in woollies and breast-feeding out of doors throughout the winter. She does not mention the influential weekly *Nursery World* (than which I read little else for about five years of my life); she does not seem to be fully aware of the influence of studies of evacuees, particularly at Anna Freud's Hampstead Nurseries, in moulding Bowlby's writing on separation trauma. Perhaps she might have mentioned the diabolical nineteenth-century pedagogues Schreber and his proven influence on his son Daniel Schreber, who wrote the famous account of his madness; or *The Prelude* ("Babies and the Infant Babe") and the Romantics, or made more of the links with literature.

Scratch the surface and all of us feel deeply about the treatment of children, having all been one. Some feel impelled to get it down in a book; and every kind of message, from hatred to sentimentality to blessedly true imaginative sympathy, filters through into them. Implicit metaphors succeed one another - children are hardy perennials, or battery chickens, or Amazonian natives; mythologies rise and fall like empires. But all the while (as books like John and Elizabeth Newton's have shown) there is a broad central stream of averagely adequate care flowing routinely on, irrespective of fashion.

Union difficulties

Helge Rubinstein

JULIA BRANNEN AND JEAN COLLARD

Marriages in Trouble: The process of seeking help.
266pp. Tavistock. £13.50.
0 422 78100 2

Everyone knows how stark the figures are: 95 per cent of women and 91 per cent of men will have been married by the time they are forty, but one in four marriages break down in the first four years, and nearly thirty per cent of all marriages now end in the divorce courts. Of the marriages where one partner has been previously divorced, 16 per cent break down (hope does not ultimately triumph over experience). The public cost of such statistics, let alone the private pain, is vast, yet as a society we offer precious little assistance to those in marital distress.

How does someone whose marriage is in difficulties obtain help? The authors of this book, one a social scientist, the other a research sociologist, set out to investigate the "help-seeking careers" of clients of two different agencies: a hospital unit for marital therapy (part of the National Health Service) and the Marriage Guidance Council (a grant-aided voluntary organization). Their aim was not to evaluate the service, the clients received but simply to discover how they got there. A somewhat limited area for research, and their findings will not hold many surprises for those who already work in the field of marital therapy, but the book makes salutary, depressing reading for anyone in the "helping professions".

Women are the chief help seekers, men are more likely to believe that emotional problems should be sorted out by the individual himself. In one case it was not until the husband had "hit bottom" by taking an overdose that he no longer felt it was "degrading" to ask for help. It was more respectable to seek treatment for a medical problem than an emotional one, and the GP is usually the first port of call. Since wives are the mostly likely to make the first approach but the majority of GPs are still men, the difference in attitudes often prolongs the process and delays the help. When appropriate help is offered - sometimes tragically - the authors cite one example where a wife was treated for four years by her GP and a hospital

psychiatrist for depression and repeated overdoses, and not until a locum doctor took a fresh look at the case was it discovered that the husband had been impotent throughout the four years of the marriage. Most doctors in the sample did not wish to involve themselves at all in their patients' marriages; only two of four doctors approached by battered wives recognized that battering had taken place, and only one of these offered help. Only one GP was described by the patient as "a doctor and a half" for willingness to listen, and this doctor, significantly, was a woman.

Furthermore, if it is the wife who presents the problem, and the GP is a man, by taking her complaints at face value and treating the wife for "her" problem, whether medically or by referral to a psychiatrist or counsellor, he reinforces the view of the woman as the one who carries the problem. This, according to the authors, suits many husbands, and is often colluded with by marriage counsellors who do not insist on seeing both partners: "when she

feels she's doing all the work" (by going to the counsellor) "I'll go along and make a show", said one husband.

Where patients were referred to a psychiatrist, they often found themselves still being treated for their symptoms, with scant attention to the marital conditions that may have caused them. Where the doctors recommended seeing a marriage counsellor, it was usually only a suggestion and not a direct referral - a situation that reflects as much on the Marriage Guidance Council as on the doctors, since the Councils mostly do not take referrals and counsellors do not always respond in a sufficiently professional way to doctors who have sent clients.

Only twenty-eight couples were interviewed. It is a pity that the sample was so small. The authors do not seem to have encountered any of the younger breed of GPs who are increasingly being trained to look for the emotional stresses which lie behind many of the physical symptoms that are

Epithalamion

(for Bridget and Stephen)

The old couple, owners of this crabby, marine hotel, sit in their armchairs like Canute, talking of the sea.

Out on the terrace, the proud, immaculate peacocks crack their breakfast eggs on cement. Our honeymoon, seedy and British. Character to proficiency.

no shy, intrusive maid, bringing us champagne. In church, ladies' hats outnumbered our friends.

We were the minister's "young friends". He told us about love and called us "Richard and Stephen".

We were the Princess in the Tower? The whole edifice rested on us, on her stiff dress and my tie-pin.

No-one could help us. With his shock of white hair and his mangy dog-collar, the minister arraigned us,

yeeping against the flesh like a dog in the manger. Imperturbed, blundering, resentful, exploited.

He thought he was performing a rescue service - a fireman at midnight, two cats up a tree in heat.

Michael Hofmann

Gadfly bites

Robin Robbins

PETER HANNING (Editor)

The Thin Stories of W. S. Gilbert
25pp. Robson Books. £7.95.
0 85051 200 2

Low London has changed, one may think, on reading that "A gentleman walking through South Kensington at 3 in the dress of nothing whatever but a nimblecuss, with the snow two feet deep on the ground, would be sure to attract attention." Gilbert's burlesque of the preferred ten years' penal servitude to such exposure would cowadeys even in daylight provoke no port public response then, perhaps, to approach from an earnest person with a clipboard seeking his opinion on the site of London's third airport, or part from those poor in spirit who are ways with us, we have apostasized on the target of Ernest Dowson's satire who offered up all "mincingly To er one God - sterile Propriety".

Laughter, like academic politics, ves off bugbears; when the monsters rove to be not just harmless but dead,

their dependent jokes lie dead alongside. Our anxieties, like the lice deserting the body of Thomas Becket, have transferred themselves from such transient phenomena as the Established Church and the aristocracy to other problems, doubtless just as trivial. Perhaps in Great Sporting and places where they sing, the money and marriages of bishops and curates are still hot topics, but few ribs will be tickled where Gilbert's gadfly seems to be going for cows no longer sacred, as in what is possibly the best crafted story of this collection, "An Elkiv of Love". Here it is not the frothy about good livings (too affectionate to rank as satire) that still amuses; merely the odd snatch of Dickensian character speech - the aged mental who confesses "I am that hard of hearing that cannons is reversing" - or the gleam of cliché: reversing wit in a daughter's response to her father's proposal to remarry: "Any wife of yours is a mamma of mine." The burglar who leaves his fortune to "the Society for Providing More Bishops" can hardly raise a grin with us who long ago saw the skull beneath skullgudery, any more than could Name of a Mind, in an age for which the hum of amusement long ago died out of humbuggery.

0 333 31051 9

Cash and culture

Louis Allen

THOMAS R. II. HAVENS

Artist and Patron in Postwar Japan: Dance, Music, Theatre, and the Visual Arts, 1955-1980

324pp. Guildford: Princeton University Press. £18.70. 0 691 05363 4

Two billion dollars' worth of art changed hands in Tokyo in 1972, 90 per cent of it domestic product. That may have been a record, but even in 1980 the figures were \$750 million for Japanese works of art and \$250 million for foreign works. One and a quarter-million people saw the 1965 'Tokaido' exhibition in six weeks; one and a half million people saw the Mona Lisa nine years later. Japan's prima ballerina Morishita Yoko has danced more classical roles than any other artist anywhere. The country has over 37,000 professional actors and dancers. Paid theatre admissions in Tokyo in 1980 reached nearly 8,000,000. 350,000 pianos and 40,000 violins are produced annually, to satisfy the needs of the one and a half million students of piano and the half million who learn the violin. There are nearly three quarters of a million students of traditional Japanese ball singing. Six million people take classes in flower arrangement, over two million in tea ceremony. There are 50,000 licensed teachers of classical Japanese dance. Ballet teachers have three quarters of a million pupils, contemporary dance teachers 800,000 and classical Japanese dance teachers a million.

Statistics of this kind emerge from every chapter of Thomas Havens's *Artist and Patron in Postwar Japan*. His first encounter with Japanese art was in 1960, when he taught English conversation to a sleepy-eyed group of young geisha at the Hasegawa tea-house in Asakusa. During the following twenty years he has become well-known as a historian of nationalism and war, but his new subject is much less familiar: the financial structure of the visual and performing arts since 1955. His study is derived from a set of interviews carried out in 1980 among performers, composers, painters, print-makers, museum directors and arts administrators, from patient dredging through official reports and statistical yearbooks and from newspaper files. The latter provide some of the more poignant evidence; for example, news of a raid on the home of a leading *kyōka* teacher in 1981, when income tax officials found 120,000,000 yen in notes under the floorboards of an alcove, tastefully concealed beneath a vase of fresh flowers.

The cash was from grateful pupils, and is a feature of the *temenos* or 'headmaster' system, which both encourages and bedevils the artist's life in Japan. A distinguished master, passes his skill on to an apprentice, but because of the respect for the *senpai* (teacher) in Japanese society, where traditional arts may thrive under such a system - which guarantees flawless performance - innovation and creativity may suffer. Authority can be

more important than skill. But the Japanese people seem to accept it, and it is generously subsidized by the middle classes, who are, according to Havens, 'the financial rock'. (Since three-quarters of Japanese now regard themselves as middle-class, it is a solid rock).

It may of course be necessary, since student fees are a way of keeping artists alive. Public and private patronage exist, but neither is the rich resource it should be. The past three decades of economic expansion and reinvestment have not been noted for sensitivity to public relations as far as the arts are concerned, though with an increasingly educated public this will change. Meanwhile dance companies subsist on pupils' fees, as do the No theatre groups; others exist on state subvention, like the *bunraku* (puppet theatre) or simply on faithful audiences, like *kabuki*. Modern theatre (*shingeki*) does not have such ample support, nor does ballet - one European teacher considers the Japanese physique to be unsuitable for ballet, a judgment which does not seem to be borne out in performance.

Where private patronage has been forthcoming is in the visual arts. Both company directors and the ordinary public prefer something tangible: it is better to own a sculpture than fund an orchestral performance, which is walled away on the night air. Firms such as Suntory Whisky or Bridgestone Tyres have founded galleries and museums. An official Agency for Cultural Affairs has existed since 1968, but it is bedevilled by a dual role, acting also as a National Trust for the preservation of historic monuments, a function which eats up two-thirds of its funds. The export of Japanese culture overseas is the responsibility of the Japan Foundation. But in 1976 the budget of similar West German foundations (such as the Goethe Institute) was six times larger, and that of the Alliance Française and the British Council was seven times larger than the Foundation's administration and programme budget. Yet in spite of the fact that there is little tradition of business patronage, and as little tax incentive as in Great Britain for private benefactors, Japan has relied on private organizations rather than on the state to maintain the arts. Of fifteen professional orchestras, fourteen are independently funded. It remains true that Japanese businesses spend three times as much money every day on expense accounts as they contribute to the arts in a year. The government agency claims to be more important for the arts than corporation or foundation giving, and indeed its budget has increased astronomically. At just under \$14 million when it was founded in 1968, it was spending over \$200 million twelve years later (when the US National Endowment for the Arts spent \$154 million).

As far as traditional theatre arts are concerned, the effect has been galvanic. The building of the Japanese National Theatre near the Palace Museum in Miyazaki in 1966 offered a central site in its 630-seat small hall to *bunraku*, which was and is a financial

sponge. (The rescue of *bunraku*, Havens suggests, was partly due to foreign prodding, not dissimilar to Fenollosa's unearthing of valuable sculpture from a rubbish dump.) The larger hall seats 1,746, 100 less when *kabuki* is staged and a walkway needed through the audience. 650,000 people a year go through its doors.

Havens's book is most interesting on who fills the theatres. For commercial theatre productions, 80 per cent of the audience are women, usually fans of domestic soap opera on a group outing; or often unmarried women returning from work. Matinee audiences are almost entirely made up of married housewives between forty and sixty. Couples tend not to go out together in the evening. The husband is glad to stay at home after a late return from work and he appears to occupy himself with his children and television.

On the other hand, avant-garde theatre such as Kara Jiro's Situation Theatre, pitched in his 'Red Tent' on a vacant lot in Tokyo, and satirizing a too materialistic post-war culture, play to an annual audience of around 15,000 university men and women. But Kara's company and those like it are financially precarious, nor do they pay their actors very little. This is the price of nonconformity, for being, as another American scholar puts it, 'one of the few places where Japanese can speculate publicly and openly on ultimate, eschatological issues'. But Kara could, of course, work in far more comfortable sites if he wished. The spartan setting is what he desires.

Theatres are often filled by book bookings from audience associations. The *shingeki* (modern western theatre) was kept alive in the postwar years by trade union support because it had been the favoured expression of proletarian theatre in the 1930s and the tradition lingered into the 1940s and 50s. Now, of the two million people who go to *shingeki*, a quarter of them

every year will watch it from discounted block seating.

Musical events are created in some cases by politically sponsored groups, such as the Rōon, or Workers' Musical Association, founded in 1949, which had three quarters of a million members in the 1970s, though there are now fewer than 200,000. Rōon was backed by the Japanese Communist Party, and naturally brought in a great number of performers from Eastern Europe. Also naturally, Japanese business set out to rival its achievements. The resulting Onkyō, or Musical Culture Association, which dates back to 1955, deliberately draws on a clientele of young clerical workers. Similarly, the para-religious Buddhist sect Sōka Gakkai has an audience group, Minon, with a membership of two million, which promotes a greater range of serious musical events than any other association - a little as if the Festival of Light were to sponsor the London Symphony Orchestra. Orchestras, in fact, are in trouble since radio station sponsorship has fallen away and they would be unable to survive without government subsidy. The star system, whereby foreign guest directors, with or without their orchestras, are imported for individual performances, is expensive, the zenith for Japanese music lovers having been Otto Klemperer and the Berlin Philharmonic, for which seats cost \$100 each.

Performers who aim at a career in classical western music (or just want to appear as amateurs in *hōgaku* recitals) pay heavily for the privilege. A kind of pedagogic mafia ensures that a well-known professor of violin will receive cash payments not only from his pupils but from his pupils' pupils. Flying visits all over Japan for a twenty-minute session with the most able of these (who will pay thousands of yen for the privilege) keep the contacts alive. To become a concert violinist at the age of

twenty-three may have cost around \$80,000 in fees and instruments. Piano apart, other instruments come lower in the scale: 'the poor reed the cello'. But this has odd effects. Two-thirds of foreign music students in Vienna are Japanese, because it's cheaper to train there than at home in Tokyo.

Where money is plentiful it is often wrongly distributed. Grants are paid to artists' federations rather than to individual artists and so many visual artists are shut out from the grants to arts institutions which took up nearly half the budget for artistic innovation. Havens's view, creativity as an absolute is an idea foreign to the Japanese. The *iemoto* system transmits technical perfection but does not foster innovation. And in a society where direct confrontation is anathema, real criticism is a feeble plant. Newspaper critics are often reporters rather than arts specialists, and venal ones at that: the space given to an exhibition may often be decided by the amount of the honours given to the critic expected to receive from the artist or gallery. Of course not all Japanese critics take bribes, but the system is sufficiently established for art criticism to have little edge.

Perhaps this is because it belongs to the field of literature, a conspicuous and no doubt intentional omission from this survey. For a complete knowledge of the impact of the arts on post-war society, a further study is needed: novels and magazines, the reading habits of the most literate nation on earth, as well as the art of the cinema, which has provided a better vehicle for Japanese fiction than translation, should be examined. The Japanese are going to become aware, as we move further into the 1980s, that material prosperity, for which they have worked hard and which they deserve, is not enough. Only when that happens will art come more fully into its own.

The samurai's mission

Ian Nish

ETŌ SHINKICHI and MARTIN B. JANSEN (Translators)

My Thirty-Three Years' Dream: The Autobiography of Miyazaki Tōten 298pp. Guildford: Princeton University Press. £18. 0 691 05348 0

Miyazaki's autobiography was written in 1902 by a young man of thirty-two who was feeling disillusioned and frustrated by all aspects of his life, personal and political. He had set out as a *ronin*, a masterless samurai, with a strong mission to liberate Asia and, in particular, to get rid of the Qing dynasty in China. During his twenties he was involved in revolutionary activities and some forms of secret service work, and had many overseas adventures in Thailand, Singapore, Hong Kong and China. But this had given him no regular income; he had become detached from his family; he deserted his wife and children in Kyushu and lived with a succession of mistresses, securing funds wherever he conveniently could.

Miyazaki was born near Kumamoto in western Japan and educated there and in Tokyo. He flirted briefly with Christian teaching, but, as he writes here, 'I had narrowly succeeded in extricating myself from Christianity; I had concluded that it was impossible to save oneself or others by evangelism.' He became the friend of the exiled leader of the Korean independence movement, Kim Ok-kyun; but any joint enterprise that they might have entertained was thwarted by Kim's assassination. Miyazaki then went to work with an emigration company, operating from Japan to Thailand. We know remarkably little about these emigration operations; and Miyazaki's account is informative and suggestive. It gives us new clues about the Tokyo end of these businesses; what kind of Japanese emigrants they attracted; what (if any) arrangements were made

at destination; and how they were received by Thai businessmen. After two visits the project ended in disaster.

After the Sino-Japanese war of 1894-5, Miyazaki's career was centred on China. He found a new patron in Inukai Ki, an up-and-coming politician with access to funds. Through Inukai, Miyazaki (with associates) received an assignment from the Japanese Foreign Ministry to investigate the state of secret societies in south China. Since many of these had revolutionary pretensions, this was an assignment for which he was well-qualified. It enabled him to make the acquaintance of key figures in the Hong Kong and Canton areas. In particular, he led to his friendship with Sun Wen (Yat-sen), who had already achieved notoriety with his book *Kidnapped in London* (1897) and who continued to be an inspiration for Miyazaki for the rest of his life. Miyazaki was temporarily diverted into an enterprise to assist with arms for the Philippines independence movement in 1898-9; but this too was a failure and a disillusionment. Meanwhile the Hundred Days of Reform had taken place in China but had been defeated in a right-wing backlash. K'ang Yu-wei, who had inspired the reform movement, was afraid that he would be killed. Thanks to the help of Miyazaki (among others), he was able to enter Japan. The K'ang group and the Sun revolutionary group would not sink their differences and Miyazaki eventually chose to associate with Sun. He then sailed to Singapore, where he was imprisoned by the colonial police and eventually expelled both from there and from Hong Kong. When the Hui-chow revolution broke out in south China in 1900, Miyazaki and Sun were unable to influence its course.

Such a record of failure caused Miyazaki to interrupt his career as a revolutionary. In 1902 he wrote *My Thirty-three Years' Dream*, which was serialized in the press. After this he decided to learn the art of *nanbu-bushi* under a master and to break with his revolutionary associates. But this aspiration also failed. Miyazaki

returned to China after the Russo-Japanese war in order to assist Sun to bring down the Ching dynasty. After this was achieved in 1912 he supported the southern faction in the second and third revolutions there.

It is most useful to have an English translation of this dream-like story. Moreover, the translation is an outstanding one, which flows freely. Perhaps the reader unfamiliar with the intricacies of these underground activities would have benefited from the inclusion of more dates; ironically, one of the few dates there is (1897) must be a misprint. If *My Thirty-three Years' Dream* is important to the general reader who wishes to understand Japan's attitude towards her continuing neighbours, it is vital to Japanese and east Asian specialists, the *Shina Ronin* and their place in Japanese politics and in public sympathy in the later nineteenth century are full of meaning for contemporary Japan. To be sure, it was a minority cause. But we find echoes of it still in the adventurous activities of Colonel Tsuji Masanobu in our own times.

The Renaissance Institute, Sophia University, 7 Kio-cho Chiyoda-ku, 102 Tokyo, was founded in 1971 partly to correct 'the misconception... all too common in Japan' that if 'the Renaissance' was a period of light, then 'the Middle Ages' is a period of darkness. 'More positively, however, it is the aim of this institute to interpret and explain that the spirit of life was at work as well as in the so-called Middle Ages, at work today.' It publishes a yearly bulletin and a series of monographs of which are *The Poetry of Shakespeare's Underworld* by Robert Herrick; *Shakespeare's 'Lamentation' by Yoshiko Nagata*; 'Thomas More in Japan' by Akio Sawada; 'A study of Richard Crashaw' by Setsuko Nakao; 'Lilical Themes in Shakespeare' by Peter Milward and 'Paganism and Spectacle in Shakespeare' by Minoru Fujita.

Applied humanism

Richard Tuck

HARRO HÖPFL

The Christian Polity of John Calvin 320pp. Cambridge University Press. £27.50. 0 521 24417 X

In the whole of sixteenth-century Europe, there was only one case of a fully accredited humanist winning a position of lasting and effective political authority within his state. What he engineered from that position was very far removed from the liberal and tolerant régime that might have been expected; for the humanist was John Calvin and his state was Geneva. The (to many modern eyes, exceedingly odd) fact that in some ways Geneva represented a natural application of humanist ideas was first and vitally pointed out by J. H. Hexter thirteen years ago in an article entitled 'Utopia and Geneva' - for despite Calvin's detestation of More there were undoubted similarities between the rather grim régimes invented by each of them. Now Harro Höpfl, a Lecturer in the Department of Politics at Lancaster University, has produced a book (also of some wit) which in many ways substantiates Hexter's insight.

What Höpfl shows is that the values of the early sixteenth-century republican, given one particular twist, could relatively easily lead to the Calvinist polity. That twist was Calvin's emphasis on the disjunction between Church and State, and on the need to reconstruct the Church on a reformed and evangelical basis. Before he became an 'evangelical' (the term Höpfl uses throughout for 'Protestant' or 'reformer'), Calvin had been a straightforward humanist

scholar. His first publication was a commentary on Seneca's *De Clementia*, an enterprise which Erasmus had urged upon the scholars of his time. Calvin's conversion in no way subverted this earlier allegiance (particularly since, as Höpfl shows, there was nothing much of theological or ethical substance there to subvert); the intellectual world of the humanist remained his home. This is well illustrated by one fact which Höpfl makes particularly clear, namely that the notion of 'natural law' played only a minor role in Calvin's thought - 'natural law was systematically being ground into insignificance between the upper millstone of divine law and the neither millstone of positive law'.

This stress on what were really two kinds of positive law, one promulgated by God and the other by the City, was eminently characteristic of the humanist: Lorenzo Valla, indeed, had questioned whether there was any meaning in the category of natural law at all. The humanist felt much safer practising the secure science of textual exegesis on a code of laws, with both the Decalogue and the Corpus Juris Civilis receiving the same kind of treatment. One of the most interesting differences between Calvin and his followers, particularly the Huguenot theorists (differences towards which Höpfl is particularly sensitive), is precisely their much greater willingness to talk about natural law in at times an almost scholastic manner.

Calvin's actually rather sparse comments on political theory in his voluminous writings consistently endorse the values of the republican and oligarchic constitution; where there was no such constitution (as in the case of northern Europe, with its great and ancient monarchies) he was somewhat at sea. What he could not do, however, was call into question the validity of their constitutional forms -

the positivism of the humanist always held him back (again, unlike his followers). His operations at Geneva were facilitated by the fact that he shared the views of the 'Messieurs', the republican oligarchs who controlled the city; consequently, disentangling Calvin's own programme for the life of the city from that put forward by the equally 'virtuous' and interventionist oligarchs is a near-impossible task.

But Geneva was not in the end simply another urban republic: the particular character of its institutions made it a byword for 'Calvinist' repression. Höpfl shows clearly that the reason for this was its ecclesiastical organization, and that Calvin's originality consisted (as one might have guessed) in the thoroughness with which he implemented his theory of church government. One interesting thing which Höpfl points to in this context is that Calvinist church government is in fact oligarchical republicanism applied to the church: the kind of society which Calvin's church represented was very similar to a familiar humanist idea (Utopia and Geneva, again). As Höpfl says, Calvin 'had not at all opted for some ecclesiastical version of monarchy; on the contrary, he clearly valued an aristocratic arrangement, where the ecclesiastical collectivity is governed by an aristocracy of merit, and the latter's own conduct is vouchsafed by external and internal policing, but primarily by self-discipline'.

But while this is in some sense a humanist ideal, Calvin's theory of Church and State taken as a whole represents something unfamiliar at least to earlier humanists, for it emphasizes the separateness of the two spheres and the independence of the Church. This is not a theme which up to that time had figured prominently in humanist writings - it is after all a

distinction which for obvious reasons is not to be found in any classical texts and which plays no part in ancient political theory. Nor is it of course a theme which is at all prominent in earlier Protestantism. Calvin's adumbration of it gave 'calvinism' its distinctive character, and more than anything else led later Protestants to 'bid John Calvin goodnight' (in the words of John Hales) and turn to the avowedly Erastian theories on offer from people like Grotius.

So odd is this aspect of Calvin's thought, and so heavy with significance for the history of the following century, that one would have welcomed a fuller explanation from Höpfl of why it took the form it did. Höpfl correctly points out that both Bucer and Capito independently came to broadly the same conclusion as Calvin, and he implies that there was an inherent momentum within Protestantism back to clericalism - the 'new clericalism' being distinguished from the old 'mainly by the greater thoroughness and probity of the new excoctors'. It is interesting that on the question of church government both More and Calvin were eventually led to clericalism, albeit of different kinds. Though ecclesiastical issues were alien to Renaissance theorists, when they had to be faced the humanist seems to have tended towards a clericalist position. Maybe ministers or priests came to be seen as a good bet for a virtuous élite - better, certainly, than the part-time philosophers in princely anterooms or city council chambers.

However, despite the uncertainty of Höpfl's treatment at this point, his book is in general entirely to be welcomed. He offers us the chance of understanding Calvin properly, and of seeing where a still important bit of the modern world has come from.

Great expectations

Bryan R. Wilson

B. W. BALL

The English Connection: The Puritan Roots of Seventh-day Adventist Belief

270pp. Cambridge: James Clarke. £7.50. 0 221 67844 3

B. W. Ball's double purpose in this book is succinctly expressed in its title: to demonstrate the Protestant orthodoxy of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (in the principal English college of which he teaches theology) and to establish how much the doctrines of that Church have in common with specifically English, Puritan precursors. He follows an exemplarily systematic procedure, examining in turn twelve cardinal theological issues as these were presented by a variety of English Puritan writers. It is more by implication than by actual demonstration that he indicates how the Seventh-day Adventist doctrine converges with or is derived from these Puritan positions, for, apart from a few lines of quotation at the head of each chapter, Ball leaves it to the reader to recognize (or to discover) just what the Seventh-day Adventist position is. Those seeking a more explicit exposition of Seventh-day Adventist teaching are directed to look elsewhere.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has today over three and a half million members throughout the world, who, at the current rate of expansion, will grow to four million within the next few years. The Church was begun in 1845 of the prediction of William Miller, a Baptist layman, of the imminent second coming, which he calculated would occur in 1843 or 1844. Some of those who experienced what Adventists themselves call 'the great disappointment' of those years, none the less clung to the essential validity of Miller's prophetic scheme (even

though he did not bring the Seventh-day Adventist Church into being). What these Christians believed was that the dates were indeed dates of importance, but that what had occurred was not the second coming of Jesus on earth, but his entry into the holy of holies of the heavenly sanctuary. Thus, it behoved Christians to re-examine their obligations to prepare for the advent, and, largely in answer to that, they began to work to eliminate the obligation to observe the seventh day. The issue turns, ultimately, on the matter of the authority of scripture versus the authority of the Church, a subject for which Ball has laid the groundwork in earlier chapters. He sets forth the case for obedience to scripture, whilst seeking to avoid the charges of legalism and ritualism to which too scrupulous an acceptance of Old Testament demands might expose him and his Church.

There is, however, a yet more testing issue: the nature of the soul. Seventh-day Adventists, together with other movements which canvass the thesis of an imminent second advent, reject on both scriptural and rational grounds, the doctrine of the soul. Man's nature is seen as immortal, but not immortal in the sense that the soul is immortal. If he were, would it not be perverse of God to have made man's immortal soul (in most cases) to cast that soul into eternal torment? Instead, Ball seeks to dispose of the concept of hell by providing alternative references, and to reassert the centrality to the Christian outworking of prophecy by the literal interpretation of bodily resurrection. The Mortalist viewpoint was not espoused by most Puritans, and many of those who did accept it were identified with disreputable parties of religious extremists, particularly so in the mid-seventeenth century. Ball has to invoke other sources here, but there were, as he carefully notes, reputable writers who made greater or lesser concessions to this point of view, and in Milton and Hobbes, and with side-glances at Newton, he finds intellectual respectability for the position he supports. There is, indeed, an English connection and a Puritan ancestry for Seventh-day Adventism.

With these steps taken, the

antecedents of adventist expectations in Puritan exegesis are demonstrated with less difficulty. The promise of the Scriptures cannot be gained, and Ball is able to bring forward Puritans who made clear the centrality in their thought of the Second Advent and the outworking of biblical prophecies. Other, less dominant, concerns of the Seventh-day Adventists can also be shown to have had at least passing support from among the Puritans: thus the idea of maintaining the body as the temple of the Holy Ghost is neatly associated with the Mortalist view, and gives biblical warrant for the more-than-biblical preoccupation of Adventists with bodily health, temperance with respect to eating and abstinence from alcohol and tobacco.

Though much was derived from English Puritanism, there are in Seventh-day Adventist teaching distinctive doctrines that are entirely their own - otherwise it would scarcely be a separate denomination. There were very special circumstances about the movement's origin in the Millerite movement and the Church's history to justify this. The distinctive view played by Mrs Ellen White, who is regarded as having been a special vessel imbued with the spirit of prophecy, and who, by visionary experiences, validated some of the movement's distinguishing doctrines. Ball does provide, *en passant*, some defence of the Church's position on works - a position that has led other Protestants to condemn Adventism for abandoning the principle of justification by grace alone. He says nothing of the even more contentious teaching of the investigative judgment, according to which Christ has been engaged in blotting out sin in the inner sanctuary in heaven prior to his second advent on earth. This teaching has some suspicion even by some Seventh-day Adventists, as being inadequately supported by scripture. These issues, however, go beyond Dr Ball's self-prescribed brief of linking Adventist Seventh-day Adventism to British Puritan thought - a case which he amply and convincingly argues.

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Going west

Patrick Lindsay Bowles

BLAISE CENDRARS

Gold
Translated by Nina Rootes
128pp. Peter Owen. £7.50.
0 7206 0597 0

In the spring of 1834, Johann August Sutter, a thirty-one-year-old bankrupt Swiss papermaker, deserted his wife and four children and set sail for America. Penniless and without prospects, his "professional contacts" were restricted to the fellow fugitives, swindlers and n'er-do-wells he was to meet on his journey. Through a combination of cunning or crooked business deals, prowess as an Indian fighter, indefatigable effort and extraordinary good luck, less than ten years later John Augustus Sutter had become America's first millionaire and multi-millionaire, the most prosperous landowner in the United States, and the founder of a new country which he patriotically christened New Helvetia. Coming to join her husband at last, Anne Sutter hears him described by strangers: "He is a king; he is an emperor. He rides on a white horse. The saddle is made of gold, the bit is gold, the stirrups, the spurs and even the horseshoes are of gold." By the time she arrives in Panama, one look of her hair has turned white. John Sutter had been the poorest of men; he is now among the richest. Frau Sutter dies, of exhaustion and amazement, on her husband's doorstep.

Well on his way to becoming "the richest man in the world", Sutter is ruined in January 1848, when an employee, James W. Marshall, discovers gold on Sutter's property. Within months, squatters from all over the world have come to his vast El Dorado to prospect. A few months more and New Helvetia has evaporated, Sutter's Garden of Eden has become the City of San Francisco. His house is burned down and his lands are taken over by men covered in mud with strange accents. One of his sons is murdered, another commits suicide. A pauper, Sutter will spend the next thirty years of his life valiantly trying to obtain some kind of compensation from the federal government in Washington. Tranny and rage kill him on June 17, 1880 at the age of seventy-eight.

The vertiginous extremes of Sutter's life-history place it squarely alongside a number of other "higher horror" stories: those, notably, of Job and

Midas. But his is also a quintessentially American tragedy, and *Gold* itself is perhaps best regarded as an American novel. No other figure of the nineteenth century – not even Lincoln – can have lived the American dream more literally or incarnated it more gloriously than did Sutter. The pathfinder and the pioneer, the rugged individualist, the self-made man and the natural aristocrat all come together in the person of this insignificant Swiss immigrant.

Certain details of the story – Sutter's Platonic self-image, his *Heimweh*, his demented Biblical exegeses, his membership of a wealthy communist religious sect at the end of his life – bear a superficial resemblance to the odyssey that has so often been traced by American royalty, from Jay Gatsby and Citizen Kane to Daniel K. Ludwig and Bob Dylan, whose absolute wealth and freedom have fuelled an already burning hatred of mere metaphorical existence and turned them towards Hughes and babyhood. Howard Hughes, subsisting at the end on a child's diet of ice cream and biscuits; Elvis Presley, who died wearing diamonds and nappies; H. L. Hunt (the model for *Dallas*'s J.R.), who, padding around his office on all fours, once confided to a reporter, "I'm crazy about crawling" – each is an exemplary American career.

But few individuals can have lived the American nightmare more pitifully than Sutter. He was left in the cold, a moral and material wreck. He died, like all poor people, wrong in the eyes of justice. His story is thus less like that of a Ford or a Rockefeller than a Lemuel Pitkin, whose dismantling Nathaniel West recounts in *A Cool Million*. Indeed Sutter remains a major exhibit in what West called the American Museum of Hideosities.

No one could have been better suited to tell Sutter's story than his fellow-countryman and adventurer Blaise Cendrars, whose jeweller's eye was finely focused on all that glitters. (One of Cendrars' most compelling, if elusive dreams was "de rouler on Cadillac, d'avoir, des poules à Cadillacs, d'écrire, de boire des scotch sans soda dans des boîtes de nuit à strip-tease.") The startling incongruity of the mock-naïve tone, which Cendrars recounts this long, cruel joke is supremely effective. First published in 1925, or four years before American riches to rags stories were to become commonplace, Cendrars' first novel remains a minor masterpiece. This fine new translation should give it its rightful place on the golden periphery of American letters.

Sinking and swimming

Anne Born

JAMES MCFARLANE (Editor)

Slaves of Love and other Norwegian short stories
Translated by James McFarlane and Janet Garton
265pp. Oxford University Press.
£12.50.
0 19 212601 6

Mountains and sea are as vividly present in any human character in this generous collection of short stories, their harsh winter magnificence and power mellowed by the beauty of the northern summer. Yet these stories are not predominantly nature pieces: they illustrate a variety of human situations and also reveal the ability of Norwegian writers, perhaps even more isolated geographically than their Scandinavian neighbours, to make occasional use of generic European cultural situations as well as native material.

There are thirty stories in the book, almost all of them very short. The writers, born between 1832 and 1941, include six women. The brevity enhances the variation in style and subject matter. Like poems, these concentrated tales achieve their object by using language with special intensity.

The collection is selected and

arranged with skill, not only to illustrate and follow the development of a century of writing, but also to develop some aspect of the preceding story with something in the succeeding one. Thus the first two stories, although quite unlike, are both about drowning at sea, and the third moves ashore only to the quayside. A group of love stories is placed together, but it is not a rigid pattern. Excellence and chronological order are the deciding factors.

During the five centuries prior to 1814 Norway was governed by Denmark and had virtually no literature of its own; although never forgetful of its proud Norse heritage. Subsequently, and until 1905, Norway had Swedish kings; so that the flowering of national culture in the nineteenth century is all the more remarkable. The gigantic figure of Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson laid the foundations of modern Norwegian fiction, especially the short story. His chosen material was taken from the life of the country people who were to create the modern Norwegian state and whom he celebrated for their strength, perseverance, and courage in facing an often tragically hard way of life. The writers who followed him pursued these qualities in characters whose situations placed them in urban as well as rural settings, occasionally outside Norway itself, and on into the labyrinths of modern psychological and sociological problems.

Light on dark

Bill Marshall

VICTOR SERGE

Midnight in the Century
Translated by Richard Greenman
251pp. Writers and Readers. £6.95.
0 904613 95 X

This is the first translation into English of a novel originally published in Paris in 1939 as *S'il est minuit dans le siècle*. Victor Serge was born in 1890 in Brussels; his ideological itinerary took in the Russian revolutionary humanism of his exiled parents, individualist anarchism in Paris prior to the First World War, conversion to Communism in the early 1920s in Petrograd; and activism in the Left Opposition following Stalin's takeover in 1927. Serge's desire to present a synthesis of these trends creates a style and thrust distinct from the products of those writers who came to Communism late and then rejected it (*Darkness at Noon* is an obvious comparison here), and also of those who slavishly followed the precepts of "socialist realism".

The "midnight" of the title refers to the darkness of the year 1934, in which the novel is set; Stalin and Hitler have consolidated their totalitarian rule. In the Soviet Union, the state apparatus, after being almost at war with the peasantry, is about to make a political U-turn. Serge's narrative opens with Kostrov, a disgraced academic, being exiled to the remote Siberian town of Chernoe. A fraternal quintet of revolutionaries are already eking out a living there: the sixty-year-old Rytkin, hero of the Civil War; Elkin, a former President of the Kiev Cheka; the Georgian student Avelli; a woman, Varvara; and an inarticulate young worker, Rodion. It is Kostrov's presence and capitulation to the Party edicts which allow the town security chief, Fedosenko, to manufacture charges of conspiracy and sabotage against them. The dissidents are arrested and face probable extinction, but Fedosenko's plan backfires when Rodion, now grown to a lucid maturity, escapes to renew his life and commitment to their cause.

The style is for the most part that of documentary realism. Serge had been arrested in Leningrad in 1933 and sent to the famine-stricken town of Orenburg in the Urals, along with his teenage son Vlado (who, now an artist, in Mexico – where Serge died in 1947 – has contributed illustrations to this volume). Through accumulation of

detail and use of earthy, colloquial vocabulary and dialogue, Serge successfully re-creates the squalor of the prison machinery and the pervasiveness of material want. At the same time, the device of cutting rapidly from one scene or register to another, using extracts from official documents, newspapers and popular songs, places such things in their historical context.

Serge also includes lyrical passages on the Siberian landscape, the stars, the eternal aspects of Russia. This recurring motif of stars and light serves to underpin the themes of individual consciousness and freedom, and to counteract the darkness of 1934. Rodion can thus proclaim with joy, "Soyons les hommes de minuit!" (rather weakly rendered here, as "Midnight's where we have to live then"). Rodion's final journey through the wilderness, his near-death, rebirth, and vision of Russia, add a Messianic note to Serge's faith in regeneration.

The novel is also a penetrating, often ironic analysis of authority and bureaucracy. Serge evokes the drama of individual confrontation to show

how the political coincides with the personal. The interrogations between the bureaucratic and dissident which form the backbone of the novel, Fedosenko's crime of rape, and conflicts between officials on different rungs in the hierarchy, condemn the bureaucracy as counter-revolutionary.

The rapidity of style and blurring of narrative outlines, however, often produce moments when the political and documentary aspects seem ill-suited to treatment in a novel. *Midnight in the Century* in fact represents a period of transition; Serge's first three fictional works are more directly autobiographical, first-person narratives containing – partly through design and partly as a result of the conditions under which he was writing – discontinuous and episodic chunks of text. In 1936–9, Serge is writing as a free man, feeling his way to the maturity and polish of his novels *The Long Day*, *The Case of Comrade Tulayev*, and the yet untranslated *Les Années sans pain* and the outstanding collection of short stories, *Le Tropicale et le nord*, in which his technique is suggestive rather than expository.

Antiphonal anecdote

Kevin Crossley-Holland

ERICA PEDRETTI

Stones
Translated by Judith L. Black
186pp. John Calder. £6.95.
0 7145 3929 5

Imagine inventing the most seasoned, robust and voluble of your neighbours to your house, making a friend of her, and tape recording her unending stream of reminiscences and comments on every aspect of day-to-day life. Now transcribe the tapes and punctuate them with your own reactions, and with the thoughts and memories they trigger off.

There you have Erica Pedretti's *Stones*. It is from first to last a fictional antiphony. Set in the poor part of a Swiss town (if that is not a contradiction in terms) in the Canton of Bern where Spanish and Italian immigrants live cheek-by-jowl with native Swiss, its principal attraction is Frau Gerster, a cheery old body who has seen it all. Irrepressible and blithe, never doubting that whatever she says will command undivided interest, she talks – almost her whole life – in detail and

repetitively about all the dramatic episodes that have peppered her life: the days when she owned a pleasure boat and the Prince of Liechtenstein dubbed her Queen of the Lake, the lake suicides, the man she rescued from drowning, the growth in the stomach of her dog. On and on she goes, a woman with a "marvellous sense of satisfaction with my own life". Frau Gerster's foil is Erica Pedretti herself, who, in her role of narrator, listens to the old woman's stories, comments on it, and here and there talks about her own life: how as a girl she crossed from wartime Prague on a Red Cross train and settled with her Swiss grandmother in Zurich; how she and her husband Gian are restoring the rotting house they live in (she speculates a great deal about its previous owner, a Russian emigré); how she is writing a report on the problems of co-existence in an urban environment for the Association of Swiss Architects.

Some writers have been commissioned by the architect to look at the question of the future, to look ahead. . . I can only bring to life something I know, can only attempt to reconstruct using words. Futurology is not within my scope. By observing the present and by comparing past experiences with new ones, by picking out a few details from the mass which surrounds me so that I can sketch one tiny segment of a reality, I try to understand that reality better.

The drab and reiterative language of the above passage is representative of the narrator's anxious and humorous contributions throughout. Frau Gerster may rabbit on, but at least she has colour and energy.

Although Pedretti does indeed select and compare (and ring the changes neatly between her two protagonists), the novel still has the air of *cinéma vérité*. This may be because Frau Gerster gives equal emphasis to everything great and small, and both she and the narrator invest their energies in a profusion of words. The sameness of tone works against the serious things that the author has to say about departures, the need for a sense of belonging, the social structure of chosen town and the problems of co-existence. The occasional bursts of vivid description, good anecdotes and *aperçus* do not really save one from being overtaken at times by the sense that dogs the depressive narrator: "a block of dead colour".

Elie Wiesel's novel *The Testament* has recently been published in paperback (296pp. Penguin. £1.95). It tells the story of Paluel Kossover, a Jew whose experiences as a Paris during the revolutionary Russia, in Paris during the 1930s and in Spain during the Civil War, culminating in imprisonment in Russia, mirror the lives and deaths of Russian poets and novelists liquidated by Stalin in 1952.

SPAIN

The ecclesiastical contribution

Peter Linehan

JAVIER FERNANDEZ CONDE

La Iglesia en la España de los siglos VIII-XIV
Two volumes, 605pp and 733pp.
Madrid: Editorial Castalia.
8 4220 1033 1

The appearance of this collaborative work – the first full-scale Spanish history of the medieval Spanish Church since Lafuente's *Historia eclesiástica de España* in the 1850s – is something of an event for Hispanists and medievalists alike. Comparison with its predecessor is instructive. Bemused as he was that he, a layman, should have written what generations of clerics had been planning and promising, Lafuente nonetheless knew how the Spanish Church between the arrival of the "Moors" in 711 and their final defeat in 1492 was the history of Spain. Churchmen, as well as writing history, had made history.

This view of the national past, enshrined in the writings of Menéndez Pelayo, has retained conventional respectability until very recently, being most notoriously restated in 1979 in R. García-Villalón's general introduction to Volume One of this History. By then, however, a new historiographical consensus had rejected the notion of Church and State as "constituent". Damaged by the findings of scholars of Spain's Islamic and Jewish past, rendered discreditable by the use made of it by the nationalist ideologues of the 1940s, it was mortally affected by the Second Vatican Council and expired (or so it had seemed) with General Franco. The very title of the series in which the present work appears, with its implication of less than perfect identity, even of disjunction, between Church and State, indicates the shift. Notwithstanding the general editor's own standpoint, it is fascinating to discover in the work of the eight contributors – four of them priests and the fifth a bishop of the old school – the extent of disagreement about the nature and identity of their subject. Even more remarkable is the eloquent reticence of their failure to face up to the question, disagreement, though recurrent, remains covert.

All shades of opinion and methods of approach are here represented. Obsession is made to Jacques Le Goff as well as to Isidore of Seville. Javier Fernández Conde has assembled a ministry of all the talents over which he presides, a shade uncomfortably, both as editor and as holder of various portfolios. The thirteen hundred pages which they have spatchcocked together provide a fitting memorial both to the present disarray of the Spanish Church and to the period of UCD rule during which the work was done.

Here we have a history written by a committee which either never met or, if it did, did so only in order to agree not to seek agreement on the central issue of what is, or was, the Church. It is not that the editor was unaware of the problem. He makes a cleanish break of it at the outset. In conformity with Lucien Febvre and Pope John XXIII, he discounts any history of the medieval Church which confines its attention to "asuntos propiamente eclesiásticos". Ecclesiastical history is not the aggregate of the diocesan records. Nor is it the essence of some biographical material – although permitted, of the familiar luminaries rather than of the often more revealing laymen. Social and cultural dimensions have to be allowed for, political and economic themes have to be included, whatever the nature of "the Church" and regardless of the validity of the assertion that "infrapersonal particularisms" matter less than the unity of the pan-peninsular whole; a questionable thesis and one not adequately tested by entrusting each nation or nation (other than the Portugal which hardly gets a look in) to its own historiographer.

The manifesto is soon forgotten: there is too little attempt at comparative study of the Church in different regions; too little

in peninsular society. Do the authors concede Lafuente's point after all? Is the history of the Spanish Church indeed indistinguishable from the history of Christian Spain? Semantically speaking, of course, the Church was society; but that is not the reason advanced here or the justification offered for including accounts of Hispano-Muslim culture, epic and lyric, and – this presumably a sop to the military in the junta – the Las Navas campaign. (Would a history of the English Church contain minute descriptions of Hastings and Flodden?) Only The Cid is missing. For once one would have welcomed a rather more elaborate methodological prologue.

That said, Fernández Conde is as much to be congratulated for superintending an operation which provides so many insights into the varied historical scholarship now being done in Spain as he is for his own substantial contributions, some thirty per cent of the entire work. Most centuries of the period covered, 711–1415, receive his attention. As he rightly observes, the Church – in the guise of the laity and lower clergy – proved notably indifferent to the momentous events of the early eighth century. (Since he has not felt himself obliged to reconcile the sharply differing views of his own contributors it is hardly surprising that he refrains from commenting on the disappointment of the expectations raised by the altogether more positive estimate of the social consequences of the conversion to Catholicism contained in the earlier volume of the History.) The revisionist interpretation of the "Reconquest", which advances social, anthropological and demographic explanations at the expense of religious motivation and the Visigothic tradition is touched on by Fernández Conde but more fully developed by J. Faci Lacasta.

Dr Faci's contributions deserve special mention for providing, with the editor's, the clearest description of the historiographical advances of the past twenty years – for example in his strenuously anti-nationalist and post-romantic account of the origins of Castile (in which, incidentally, the extent of disagreement about the nature and identity of their subject. Even more remarkable is the eloquent reticence of their failure to face up to the question, disagreement, though recurrent, remains covert.)

In his anxiety to place the study of Spanish society in a European context Faci is sometimes willing to blur the differences between the western and eastern peninsular kingdoms. In both regions we are dealing with feudal organization", he writes, "and so the similarities are greater than the differences." Yet elsewhere, when it suits the argument, use is made of these "conventional but convenient" differences. His insistence that Spain's history was "European" but not determined by European influences leads him into some hazy discussion of, for example, the role of the Cluniac Order. And his penchant for comparing and contrasting the peninsular story with that of other Western societies produces some odd results. Would any historian in his right mind, he asks *a propos* Sancho the Great of Navarre and Spanish Conqueror, "introduce" feudalism after 1066? Yet Faci's iconoclastic chapters are almost invariably interesting, and for them alone the History would deserve a warm welcome.

At the other extreme, J. F. Rivera stands for the traditional values – based in his case upon a remarkable knowledge of the documentary riches

which stigmatizes as "cowards" those Christians who proscribed to Islam in thirteenth-century Cordova, and finds room for reflections on the damage done thereby to racial purity and for anecdotal asides on the emir's prolific progeny, the whole couched in a pronounced "Heroes of the Nations" style.

The distinguished historian of Spanish monasticism, A. Linage Conde, ought really to have been called to order and required to conform to the editorial discipline observed by his colleagues. In 150 pages bereft of footnotes and references he discusses the work of scholars whose names are missing from the bibliography attached to his (as to all) chapters and omits to mention where their views can be found expounded. Dismissive, allusive and self-indulgent by turns, Linage (who was the very best man for the job) gives the impression of addressing a seminar of aficionados from the depths of his study armchair. Understanding is not assisted by his use of open-ended quotes. The division of labour between him and Faci regarding different aspects of monasticism separates body and soul and so deprives the Cluniacs of life.

The eastern regions are not well served by A. Oliver Monserrat whose bitty pieces – seven of them running to ten pages or fewer – hardly scratch the surface of the subject. He relies overmuch on dictionaries and the Spanish translation of Fliche-Martin. (In this he is not the sole offender. Authorities: even the egregious Faci depends on the Carlyles for Egidius Romanus and describes as "recent" a monograph published in 1947. Use is made of superannuated editions. A good deal of important non-Spanish scholarship is either ignored or – as in the case of work on the churches' supposed poverty in the thirteenth century – unquestioningly followed, on this occasion by Fernández Conde who falls to ask why – *¿por qué?* – as conditions had so materially improved a century later.)

There is a model account of the history of ethnic-religious minorities (by R. González) and, in time-honoured style, each part concludes with an essay on Art History (by Professors Barbero and Vigil. At times the straining for novelty becomes tiresome: a monograph by the same name is described as "old and interesting"). Still his message is important and clear: Spain was not different from Europe. In various long-controverted matters – feudalism in the eleventh century, the intellectual renaissance in the twelfth, monarchy in the fourteenth – peninsular developments paralleled those north of the Pyrenees: paralleled them without depending on them. Because the peninsula was feudalized by the end of the eleventh century the Spanish Church (or churches) stood in need of the same reforms as did the Western Church at large.

Above the snowline

James Kirkup

AGUSTI BARTRA

Halks d'Artsal
147pp. Andorra-la-Vella: Serra Airoso. 450 pts.
AGUSTI BARTRA
Niva
129pp. Andorra-la-Vella: Serra Airoso. 350 pts.

For the millions of tourists who every year visit the great dry-free bazaar of Andorra la Vella, it comes as a surprise to learn that Andorra, this magnificently beautiful and fiercely individualistic country between France and Spain, has its own language and culture. *Poems per Andorra*, a 500-page anthology of Catalan poems about the Principality, recently published by the *Edició del Comarcal d'Andorra la Vella*, does something to correct this error. Another important new development in the spread of Catalan – and, typically Andorran – culture is the inauguration of a new poetry series called *Col·lecció Niva* by the *Edicions Serra Airoso*. The first two well-produced volumes have recently appeared, one of them by the great Catalan poet, exiled for many years in Mexico, Agustí Bartra, who has just died. Shortly before his death he

of the diocesan vicissitudes of the period. This has maps – but then Don Demetrio is a bishop – and is authoritative, repeating what the author has published over the last forty years and reiterating much of what Rivera and Oliver have already stated in their respective chapters.

Repetition is a problem throughout. The editor, again, is engagingly frank on this score. The degree of overlap is disguised by the wholly inadequate index of names and by the almost total absence of cross-references within the text. While, therefore, such subjects as the Visigothic tradition and diocesan geography receive double treatment, other important issues are left out of account. The crucially important Council of Coyanosa (1055) – central to Faci's thesis – is neglected in the eleventh-century chapters and only alluded to when the story reaches the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The Jeronimists crop up not where the reader would look for them, in Linage's chapter on the New Orders, but in Fernández Conde's account of Juan I of Castile's reforms. The beginnings of the cult of Guadalupe, as influential in the fourteenth century as Santiago had been in the ninth, receive one scant paragraph. On royal manipulation of religious sentiment (of which the Guadalupe story is a prime example) and its counterpart, the ecclesiastical contribution to the development of Christian kingship, the work is silent. The absence of any discussion of canon law and of the role of Spanish canonists is deplorable, not least when so much good work is being done on the subject by Spanish scholars. Alfonso X's cultural activities are twice covered but in neither place is the distinctive contribution of the ecclesiastics considered.

The editor expresses the hope that, from consideration of the relationship of the medieval Church to the society in which it existed, "el lector creyente" may be able better to discern the way ahead for the Church now. Anything is possible. Yet it seems more likely that he will be left wondering what role the authors, collectively and individually, ascribe to the Church – now or then. Lafuente's old mould is cracked beyond repair. But that view of the past, although mistaken, at least held together. A new synthesis has long been needed. By their very failure to address themselves to the central question the contributors to this volume have indicated something of the lie of the land. As to the synthesis itself, however – as Ortega y Gasset remarked of another field but no less enterprise fifty years ago – *no era eso*

Andorra's best-known ski resorts, Arinsal, and this collection of *halks* about that lovely village is his last work. The subjects are those of most Andorran poets – mountains, snow, the seasons, trees and the peculiarly impressive nature of the Andorran character and landscape. Of course, nature themes are universal, not particularly Andorran. But Bartra gives Andorra a distinctly Oriental atmosphere, at the same time preserving its profound individual character through the use of Catalan in these crisp, refined, brief stanzas that always observe strictly the 5-7-5 syllable count of the form:

Let me die standing
as smoke lets itself be changed
without knowing how.
It is a lovely volume, elegantly illustrated with Japanese woodcuts and one which will appeal to all amateurs of Japanese poetry in European languages.

It is given a worthy introduction by the young Catalan poet, Anton Carrera, whose own interesting collection, *Niva*, is the first in what is planned as a series. Carrera's poetry is more complex than Bartra's stripped elegance, but they are poems full of native passion and joy of language, musical, vivid and essentially Catalan. This is a new poetic movement that is a new Andorran and encourages a new Andorran and throughout the world.

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Crucible of grief

David Mitchell

ANTONY BEEVOR

The Spanish Civil War
320pp. Orbis. £12.
0 85613 305 1

Since Ronald Fraser's mammoth, minutely contextualized slab of oral history, *Blood of Spain*, was published in 1979, it is perhaps not strictly accurate to claim, as does the jacket blurb, that this is the first full-length English-language account of the Spanish Civil War to appear since Franco's death. But the bold, clean, driving narrative offers a substantial, and substantially reliable, version of a sequence which, in Fraser and in Hugh Thomas's recently revised history, is extravagantly, and sometimes bewilderingly, thickened with footnotes and appendices.

With pardonable exaggeration, George Orwell told Arthur Koestler – who, as a former Comintern propaganda virtuoso, knew exactly what he meant – that "History stopped in 1936." The propaganda battle continues, and Antony Beevor, quoting a Spanish proverb ("history is a common meadow in which anyone can make hay"), suggests that the War still carries such an emotional charge that utter impartiality is impossible. His brief is the daunting one of "explaining the enmities and alliances in terms of the three basic forces of conflict: right against left, centralists against regionalist, authoritarian against libertarian".

The tensions between militant radicals and reformists or time-servers in the anarcho-syndicalist and socialist movements, and within the quasi-fascist Falange, are carefully described; as are the methods used by Franco, and by what approach and *discrepancies* communist, socialist and *the Falange* called "the *Stalin-bougeois alliance*", to exploit them. Some might say that the rôle of Soviet agents and "advisers", under orders to give the impression of aiding the workers' revolution while doing their damndest to stifle it, are too harshly condemned; and the Communist-inspired image of Premier Juan Negrín, that smooth advocate of "controlled democracy" as "the incarnation of the spirit of Republican resistance" taken some hard knocks itself, however – as Ortega y Gasset remarked of another field but no less enterprise fifty years ago – *no era eso*

The tragic turmoil of the last weeks of the war when, with Franco's victory inevitable, a truly Popular Front of libertarians, socialists and disillusioned fellow-travellers at last turned on the Communist "saviours" is explained with commendable lucidity. The concluding chapters on post-war resistance give Franco and his unattractive team too little credit for advancing, however fortuitously, the long-delayed bourgeois-industrial revolution. Compression due to ambitious scope and limited space makes for breathlessness at times. But along with some sputtering there are many sharp flashes of insight. The text is well and profusely illustrated by many Spanish artists, *travels* in what the author de Madariaga called "the crucible of grief" underwent a spiritual conversion. . . like Koestler under sentence of death in Seville or like Joaquín Rabero, an ardent young Communist who, after many years in prisons and labour camps, became a Protestant pastor.

Volume Five in the six-volume Complete Edition of the works of the thirteenth-century religious poet *Don Juan de Barro* has now been published (208pp., £12. Tamesis Books, 0 7293 0599 4). It includes *El sacrificio de la misa*, *La Vida de Santa Oria* and *El Martirio de San Lorenzo*.

